

**ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN CASTILE
IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.**

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SUMMARY

This study attempts to analyse the relationship between economy and society in fifteenth century Castile. The sources of wealth of various social groupings are examined and set against the general economic background.

The Castilian economy showed signs of an increasing diversification of economic activities - especially in the peripheral areas of the kingdom. But there were also signs of a growing agrarian crisis which assumed serious proportions by the 1460s. Nominal prices remained fairly stable till about 1450 but rose very sharply during the second half of the century.

The seigneurial and landed income of the nobility declined in real value as prices rose. There was little demesne exploitation and such income tended to be inelastic. The great nobility recouped their losses by acquiring gifts and pensions from the monarchy. The lesser nobility often resorted to brigandage but also found an outlet in the civil wars of the period.

The Church was faced with similar problems of static income. However, unlike the nobility, the Church on the whole failed to find a solution to the decline in the real value of revenues. Moreover, monastic and parochial revenues were usurped by the nobility.

Political control of the towns fell to the great nobility /

nobility, although the vast majority of urban offices were held by patrician oligarchs. The latter were often deeply involved in the finances of urban and royal government and tended to invest their profits in activities and forms of wealth which identified them with the nobility. Many conversos made remarkably successful careers for themselves in the Church and also acquired high offices in urban and royal government.

The political history of the period was the expression of the disparity between static incomes and rising prices. Towards the middle of the century, popular insurrections in the towns, hatred of the conversos, and noble intrigue fused into an explosive mixture which produced the anarchy of the 1460s.

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5. Seville in the fifteenth century. The town - parishes and administrative areas. Lands of Seville - administration and fiscality.
6. Jews and Moors. Distribution and location, 1450-74.

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>A.A.</u>	<u>Anthologica Annua</u>
A.C.V.	Archivo de la Catedral, Valladolid
A.D.M.	Archivo de los Duques de Medinaceli
Ad.	Adelantamiento
Alc.Duc.	Alcalá-Ducado
Alc.Mar.	Alcalá-Marquesado
Cog.	Cogolludo
Com.	Comares
Med.	Medinaceli
Sant.	Santisteban
<u>A.D.P.</u>	<u>Archivo de derecho público</u>
<u>A.E.M.</u>	<u>Anuario de estudios medievales</u>
<u>A.E.S.C.</u>	<u>Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations</u>
A.G.S.	Archivo General de Simancas
C.y J.de Hac.	Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda
D.de C.	Diversos de Castilla
E.M.R.	Escribanía Mayor de Rentas
Est.	Estado
Exp.Hac.	Expedientes de Hacienda
Q.deC.	Quitaciones de Corte
<u>A.H.D.E.</u>	<u>Anuario de historia de derecho español</u>
A.H.N.	Archivo Histórico Nacional
Cal.	Calatrava
Sec.Dip.	Sección diplomática
parts.	particulares
<u>A.Hisp.</u>	<u>Archivo Hispalense</u>
<u>A.I.A.</u>	<u>Archivo Ibero-Americano</u>
<u>A.L.</u>	<u>Archivos Leoneses</u>
A.M.C.	Archivo Municipal, Córdoba
A.M.J.	Archivo Municipal, Jerez
A.M.L.	Archivo Municipal, León
A.M.S. /	

ABBREVIATIONS (contd)

<u>A.M.S.</u>	Archivo Municipal, Seville. All references are to the <u>mayordomazgo</u> section unless specifically stated.
<u>A.P.S.</u>	Archivo de Protocolos, Seville
<u>A.U.H.</u>	<u>Anales de la universidad hispalense</u>
<u>Al-And.</u>	<u>Al-Andalus</u>
<u>Anales de Orihuela</u>	<u>Anales de Orihuela</u> , ed. J. Torres Fontes, 2 vols. (Orihuela, 1954-6)
<u>Anecdotalario Sevillano</u>	<u>Anecdotalario Sevillano del siglo xv</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Seville, 1947)
<u>B.A.E.</u>	<u>Biblioteca de autores españoles</u>
<u>B.Hisp.</u>	<u>Bulletin Hispanique</u>
<u>B.I.E.A.</u>	<u>Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Asturianos</u>
<u>B.I.F.G.</u>	<u>Boletín de la Institución Fernán-González</u>
<u>B.N.,MS.</u>	Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), sección de manuscritos
<u>B.R.A.H.</u>	<u>Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia</u>
<u>B.R.V.P.</u>	<u>Boletín de la Real Sociedad Vascongada de Amigos del País</u>
<u>B.S.E.C.</u>	<u>Boletín de la Sociedad Castellana de Excursiones</u>
<u>Bol.M.y P.</u>	<u>Boletín de la biblioteca Menéndez y Pelayo</u>
<u>Bol.R.A.E.</u>	<u>Boletín de la Real Academia Española</u>
<u>C.D.R.A.H.</u>	<u>Memorias de don Enrique IV de Castilla, II. Colección Diplomática</u>
<u>C.H.E.</u>	<u>Cuadernos de Historia de España</u>
carp.	carpeta
<u>Claros /</u>	

ABBREVIATIONS (contd)

<u>Claros Varones</u>	Pulgar, Fernando de, <u>Claros Varones de Castilla</u> , ed. J. Domínguez Bordona (Madrid, 1954)
<u>Codoín</u>	<u>Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España</u>
<u>Col. Dip. Carmona</u>	<u>Colección Diplomática de Carmona</u>
<u>Col. Dip. Cuéllar</u>	<u>Colección Diplomática de Cuéllar</u>
<u>Col. Dip. Riaza</u>	<u>Colección Diplomática de Riaza</u>
<u>Col. Dip. Sepúlveda</u>	<u>Colección Diplomática de Sepúlveda</u>
<u>Cortes</u>	<u>Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y Castilla</u>
<u>Cron. Enrique IV</u>	Enríquez del Castillo, <u>Crónica del rey don Enrique el cuarto de Castilla</u> (B.A.E., LXX, 1953)
<u>Cron. Juan II</u>	Pérez de Guzmán, <u>Crónica de Juan II</u> (B.A.E., lxxviii, 1953)
<u>Cron. Lucas de Iranzo</u>	Escavias, <u>Hechos del Condestable don Miguel Lucas de Iranzo</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Madrid, 1940)
<u>Cron. Luna</u>	Chacón, <u>Crónica de don Alvaro de Luna</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Madrid, 1940)
<u>Cron. Valladolid</u>	Sainz de Baranda, ed. <u>Cronicon de Valladolid</u> (Codoín, xiii, 1848)
<u>E.H.M.</u>	<u>Estudios de Historia Moderna</u>
<u>E.S.</u>	<u>Estudios Segovianos</u>
<u>Econ.H.R.</u>	<u>Economic History Review</u>
<u>El Victorial</u>	Díez de Games, <u>El Victorial</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Madrid, 1940)
<u>Garci Sánchez</u>	Garci Sánchez, <u>Los anales de Garci Sánchez, jurado de Sevilla</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Seville, 1953)
<u>Generaciones /</u>	

ABBREVIATIONS (contd)

<u>Generaciones</u>	<u>Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y Semblanzas</u> ed. J. Domínguez Bordona (Madrid, 1954)
<u>González, Col. Cédulas</u>	<u>Colección de cédulas ... existentes en el real archivo de Simancas</u> , ed. T. González, 6 vols. (Madrid, 1829-33)
<u>H. Sacra</u>	<u>Hispania Sacra</u>
<u>Halconero</u>	<u>Carrillo de Huete, Crónica del Halconero de Juan II</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Madrid, 1946)
<u>Hisp.</u>	<u>Hispania</u>
<u>Hisp. (cuadernos anexos)</u>	<u>Cuadernos Anexos a la Revista Hispania</u>
<u>Hisp. Rev.</u>	<u>Hispanic Review</u>
<u>I. T. T. M.</u>	<u>Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses</u>
<u>J. W. H.</u>	<u>Journal of World History</u>
<u>Jb. f. G. Lateinamerikas</u>	<u>Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas.</u>
<u>leg.</u>	<u>legajo</u>
<u>M. A.</u>	<u>Le Moyen Age</u>
<u>M. C. V.</u>	<u>Mélanges de la Casa de Velásquez</u>
<u>Mem. Divs. Haza.</u>	<u>Valera, Memorial de Diversas Hazañas</u> , ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Madrid, 1941)
<u>N. R.</u>	<u>Nueva Recopilación</u>
<u>O. R.</u>	<u>Ordenanzas Reales</u>
<u>P. P.</u>	<u>Past and Present</u>
<u>R. A. B. M.</u>	<u>Revista de archivos, bibliotecas, y museos</u>
<u>R. A. B. M. /</u>	

ABBREVIATIONS (contd)

<u>R.A.B.M., Madrid</u>	<u>Revista del archivo, biblioteca, y museo, Madrid</u>
R.A.H.	Real Academia de la Historia
S. y C.	Colección Salazar y Castro
R.C.V.	Archivo de la Real Chancillería, Valladolid
<u>R.E.E.</u>	<u>Revista de Estudios Extremeños</u>
<u>R.E.S.</u>	<u>Revue d'histoire économique et sociale</u>
<u>R.H.</u>	<u>Revue historique</u>
<u>R.U.M.</u>	<u>Revista de la universidad de Madrid</u>
<u>Ref. Halconero</u>	<u>Barrientos, Refundición de la crónica del Halconero, ed. J. de M. Carriazo (Madrid, 1946)</u>
<u>Rev. Lit. Comp.</u>	<u>Revue de littérature comparée</u>
<u>Rom. Phil.</u>	<u>Romance Philology</u>
<u>S.P.</u>	<u>Siete Partidas</u>
<u>Sef.</u>	<u>Sefarad</u>

CHAPTER I

THE EVIDENCE AND THE PROBLEM

This chapter is intended to provide a brief outline of printed and archival source material and to survey the inadequate nature of historians' knowledge of the Castilian economy and society in the fifteenth century.

1. Printed Sources

Most of the chronicles for this period of Castilian history were written in the vernacular and the centre of attention was usually the royal court.¹ Indeed the fifteenth century inherited the work of one of the most remarkable chroniclers of Castile, Pedro López de Ayala, whose narrative for the period 1350-96 covered three entire reigns and part of a fourth.² Subsequent chroniclers did not always maintain the high standard set by López de Ayala. Yet there was one essential point of continuity in that the fifteenth century saw the continuation /

1 See generally B. Sánchez Alonso, Historia de la historiografía española (Madrid, 1947), i. 291-353. The various chronicles edited by J. de Mata Carriazo contain detailed and valuable introductions. On the revival of Latin historiography in the second half of the fifteenth century see the comments of R.B. Tate, 'The Anacephaleosis of Alfonso García de Santa María', in Hispanic studies in honour of I. González Llubera, ed. F. Pierce (Oxford, 1959), pp.387-401.

2 López de Ayala, Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla Pedro I, Enrique II, Juan I, y Enrique III (B.A.E.) lxvi. 393-614, and lxxiii. 1-271.

continuation of an 'official' version of political events.¹ Not all these 'official' histories are favourable to their royal patrons. Alfonso de Palencia, chronicler and latin secretary to Henry IV, was responsible for a masterly and vicious attack on the king.²

Two chronicles which are, in effect, 'knightly' biographies provide additional information for Castilian history during the reigns of John II and Henry IV. The hero of one of these chronicles is Alvaro de Luna.³ It provides an interesting contrast to the 'official' version of events but it is marred by excessive adulation. Far more interesting is the chronicle which deals with the activities of Henry IV's constable, Miguel Lucas de Iranzo.⁴ The constable spent most of his time at his own court at Jaen and the chronicle is a useful source of information for the style of life of the nobility and for the military situation along the frontier with the kingdom of Granada.

The number of 'official' and 'knightly' chronicles is impressive. In contrast, other kinds of chronicles are not available. The monastic historian had long since disappeared.⁵ /

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- 1 Crónica de Juan II de Castilla (B.A.E.) Lxviii. 273-695; Crónica de Enrique IV de Castilla (B.A.E.) Lxx. 99-222.
 - 2 Crónica de Enrique IV, ed. A. Paz y Melia (Madrid, 4 vols, 1904-8).
 - 3 Crónica de Don Alvaro de Luna, ed. J. de Mata Carriazo (Madrid, 1940).
 - 4 Hechos del condestable don Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, ed. J. de Mata Carriazo (Madrid, 1940).
 - 5 For a comparison with England see E.S. Proctor, Alfonso X of Castile, patron of literature and learning (Oxford, 1951), chap. v.

disappeared. There is evidence that the town chronicle may not have been unknown but no examples survive.¹ There are two works, however, which surpass all other chronicles.

The collections of short biographies written by Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Fernando del Pulgar are indispensable tools for the historian.² They provide a remarkable series of biographical sketches of the politically important figures of the century - kings, queens, nobles, favourites, masters of military orders, prelates, men of learning, and administrative officials. The value of these short biographies lies in the fact that they follow a pattern of analysis which rarely omits to present the reader with a comprehensive but brief picture of the individual in question. The biographies of prelates serve as a good example. In the case of almost every prelate there is a discussion of his social origins, his physical characteristics, the history of his career, his education and learning, his relationship to the Crown, and his religious qualities. Both authors are on the whole remarkably accurate and objective and the two works must rank as the two gems of Castilian historiography in the fifteenth /

1 Juan Guillén was commissioned by Seville to write a chronicle which has not survived: A.M.S., caja 1445-6, 4th Aug. 1445. The Anales de Garcí Sánchez, ed. J. de Mata Carriazo (Seville, 1953), however, devotes its attention to urban history.

2 Pérez de Guzmán, Generaciones y Semblanzas ed. J. Domínguez Bordona (Madrid, 1954); Pulgar, Claros varones de Castilla ed. J. Domínguez Bordona (Madrid, 1954).

fifteenth century.

From a general point of view three collections of laws are especially useful to the historian of later medieval Castile. The Siete Partidas of Alfonso X give a systematic and very comprehensive expression of the growing and unifying power of the monarchy. They are indispensable for the legal aspects of the relationship between government and society. The Ordenanzas Reales de Castilla, produced in 1484, relied heavily on the legislation of monarchs of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and, for this reason, they are an obvious and useful source of information. The third collection of laws is Philip II's Nueva Recopilación de las Leyes de España which appeared in 1567. This compilation is useful, above all, for one reason - the bulk of medieval legislation which it contains is a salutary reminder of the marked continuity between the later middle ages and the early modern period.¹

The acts of the cortes for this period of history have to be used carefully.² Legislation could result from joint action by king and cortes and a good deal of this was incorporated into the law codes. Yet the king could issue /

1 These and other law codes are published in the twelve volumes of Los Códigos españoles concordados y anotados (Madrid, 1848).

2 Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y Castilla, published by the Real Academia de la Historia, 7 vols (Madrid, 1861-1903).

issue laws by virtue of his own power and he could change decisions which had been made during meetings of the cortes. Moreover most of the recorded deliberations of the cortes consist of petitions to which monarchs made extremely vague and evasive replies. Bearing in mind the limited powers of the cortes, these petitions can provide much information on a wide variety of topics.

2. Archival Sources

The central machinery of government in Castile was fairly well articulated and in theory almost all its documents should have survived. All documents issued by the chancery were supposed to be registered. Clerks recorded the deliberations of the royal councils. The chief court of justice, or audiencia, had been separated from the centre of administration and had its own administrative machinery. The finances of the monarchy were carefully controlled by an impressive array of officials and registers. A good deal of this documentation is to be found in the archive of Simancas. It was well on into the sixteenth century before Castile possessed a proper repository for documents at Simancas. However there is evidence that the Castilian monarchy was moving in this direction as early as 1437 for, in that year, John II ordered that all financial /

financial records should be deposited in an archive in Segovia.¹ This measure, and similar measures by the Catholic sovereigns, may account for the amount of documentation which is preserved in Simancas.

Nevertheless, considering all the administrative controls and checks that existed, the surviving documentation is meagre. Undoubtedly a great deal of material was lost through the simple fact that the royal court was forever on the move. Once documents and registers ceased to be of immediate importance they were presumably left in the nearest convenient place and there is at least one late fourteenth century ordinance ordering officials to burn documents.² The hazards of war, both in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries, were also probably responsible for the loss of a great deal of documentation. It is still possible, however, that the chancery registers may one day be discovered in some cathedral archive.³

Ecclesiastical bodies kept records which were less subject to loss and dispersion than those of the nomadic monarchy /

- 1 A.G.S., C. y J. de Hac., leg 1, no.5. See also A. de la Plaza Bores, 'Noticias sobre algunos depósitos documentales castellanos anteriores al de Simancas', R.A.B.M., Separata (1958).
- 2 A.M.J., caja 12, no.2 de orden no.33, contains a royal order of 20 April 1396 that accounts of the renta de albaquías should be burnt.
- 3 A chancery register for the years 1283-6 is published and studied in M. Gaibrois Ballesteros, Historia del reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla (3 vols., Madrid, 1922-8).

monarchy. The result is that cathedrals such as those at León, Toledo, Salamanca, and Burgos retain impressive collections of fifteenth century material. However, the difficulties presented to the historian who wishes to work in cathedral archives are considerable and time can be more profitably spent on monastic documentation. Many monasteries, such as San Isidoro in León, still possess valuable collections of documents. The great bulk of monastic material, however, is now to be found in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. The range of this material varies greatly but enough has survived to enable the historian to work on particular examples or to hazard wider generalizations.

The great nobility maintained administrations which were a reflection of the royal pattern of government. Surviving material of this kind is intermingled with documentation of a more private nature relating to such matters as marriages, wills, personal expenses, and dowries. Two archives, above all, contain a vast amount of documentation on the Castilian nobility - the Archivo de los Duques de Frías, near Córdoba, and the Archivo de los Duques de Medinaceli in Seville. This thesis makes use of the material in the latter archive. The Medinaceli archive contains documentation which dates back to at least the ninth century. The documentation, far from being restricted to the region of Andalusia, covers the whole Iberian peninsula. For the kingdom of Castile alone /

alone there are almost 2,000 legajos or bundles of documents relating to Galicia, 900 for Castile, León, and the Basque provinces, 65 for Extremadura, and almost 1,500 for Andalusia. Many of the documents contained in these legajos date from the fifteenth century. Moreover, the vicissitudes of time can work in the historian's favour. Opportune marriages and the extinction of male lines have resulted in the possibility that the historian working in the Medinaceli archive can obtain documentation on many of the great noble families of the fifteenth century - the Figueroa, Guzmán, Ponce de León, Sarmiento, Acuña, Aguilar, Portocarrero, Manrique, Sandoval, Silva, Fernández de Córdoba and Medinaceli.

Two main kinds of documentation in municipal archives are useful for the study of towns. In the first place there are the registers of the deliberations of town councils. At present the earliest known examples of this kind of evidence are in Burgos where the municipal archive contains a series of Libros de Actas Municipales starting in 1388. Since these registers have largely been ignored by historians it is possible that other towns may possess earlier registers. The municipal archive of Murcia has fifteenth century Actas Capitulares, Palencia has at least one register dating from 1421, and Jerez de la Frontera has an almost complete set for the whole century. It seems valid to argue that such registers were kept by most towns /

towns since the archive of the real chancillería, at Valladolid, possesses fragments of the fifteenth century registers of the very small town of Villalon.

In most cases the registers give invaluable information on the urban oligarchies and urban finances. However in at least one case, Seville, the financial records survive as a separate series. The financial records of the town of Seville must surely be one of the most remarkable collections of documents to survive from the later middle ages in Castile. Most of this material remains uncatalogued but there is an almost complete series of yearly accounts for the fifteenth century. These accounts are a mine of information on the urban oligarchies, urban administration, prices and wages, agrarian crises, the military organization of the frontier, and royal and urban taxation.

It has, of course, been impossible to work in all the big municipal archives. My choice was determined by the fact that historians were working on fifteenth century material at Burgos and Murcia. Their work was not focussed on social and economic history but on political and religious history. Nevertheless there was the possibility that such work might help to complement my own research in more neglected archives. The municipal archives of León and Córdoba proved to be disappointing but these disappointments were balanced by the rich archives /

archives of Seville and Jerez and the discovery of fragments of the Villalón registers in Valladolid.

3. Historians and fifteenth century Castile

How have historians used the evidence which has been briefly outlined? On the whole they have concentrated on the sources which are best suited for the writing of the narrative of political history. Thus, the published sources - chronicles, law codes, and acts of the cortes - figure prominently in most historical studies. This does not mean that archive material has been neglected but, in most cases, it has been used to rectify or elaborate the political narrative of the printed sources.

Few studies have appeared on economic and social history and on the history of royal institutions. Moreover the attention of most of these studies has been focussed on the last two decades of the fifteenth century and on the sixteenth century. Indeed it is no exaggeration to state that almost all information on the history of fifteenth century institutions, economy, and society is to be derived from works which deal mainly with the reign of the Catholic sovereigns. The result is that our knowledge of the fifteenth century prior to the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella is fragmentary and inadequate. There /

There has been too much emphasis on the simple and archaic formula which contrasts anarchy and civil war, on the one hand, with the emergence of a 'modern' economy, society, and state on the other hand. In these circumstances the researcher is extremely grateful for those studies which are exceptions to the general rule. There are excellent works on the Mesta,¹ the role of the Jews and conversos in political and social history,² and on particular towns or regions of the kingdom of Castile.³ Above all, despite the inadequate information available in print, there are the remarkable and valuable syntheses which were inspired by Vicens Vives.⁴

This thesis attempts to analyse the sources and value of the various forms of wealth of the politically significant groups in society - the nobility, the Church, and the towns. Juridically, Castilian society was divided into three /

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- 1 J. Klein, The Mesta. A study in Spanish economic history (Cambridge, Mass., 1920).
 - 2 Y. Baer, A history of the Jews in Christian Spain (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1966).
 - 3 J.A. García de Cortazar, Viscaya en el siglo XV. Aspectos económicos y sociales (Bilbao, 1966); H. Sancho de Sopranis, Historia Social de Jerez de la Frontera al fin de la edad media (3 vols., Jerez, 1959). (Henceforth cited as Sancho, Historia). Both these works, however, tend to concentrate on the reign of the Catholic sovereigns.
 - 4 J. Vicens Vives, Manual de historia económica de España (3rd ed., Barcelona, 1964); J. Vicens Vives (ed.), Historia social y económica de España y América (5 vols., Barcelona, 1957-9), II (Henceforth cited as Vicens, Manual and Vicens, Historia).

three estates. Yet the legal division into estates was not a phenomenon peculiar to the later middle ages. Moreover the estates were not so clearly marked off from each other as the laws or the acts of the cortes suggest. To reveal the realities behind the façade of the juridical criteria, the whole range of evidence has to be used and this in itself produces problems.

Even in an estate society the quantity and quality of wealth helped to determine political power and social status. Research into this problem is still at a rudimentary stage as far as the kingdom of Castile is concerned. The wealth of the nobility and the Church, for example, has been gauged by using the totally inadequate evidence of royal grants of lordship and the documents founding mayorazgos. Royal grants of lordship, however, emanated from a chancery whose officials continued to use the same phrases and concepts for long after realities had changed. The secretary of the chancery, like his counterpart in France, worked on the basis of a style book.¹ Once again, therefore, the juridical formulae of such documents obscure the realities of the situation. Yet, problems well known to English and French historians - for example, the decline of /

¹ B.N., MS., 6711, for example, is a style book of over 200 folios.

of the manorial economy - continue to be obscured behind sweeping generalizations about lordships and jurisdictions.

Accounts provide the ideal basis for calculating the value of the various sources of wealth and for comparing the wealth and power of different social groupings. However, accounts are not always available. Municipal and ecclesiastical accounts survive in greater numbers than the accounts of the great nobility. The evidence of tax farms and notarial records help in the case of merchants. There is no direct evidence which can be used to calculate the wealth of members of the lesser nobility. The paucity of information on the great nobility, however, may reflect a genuine lack of interest by them in certain sources of revenue such as agrarian income. The few accounts of the landed income of the nobility which do survive, provide striking examples to support this view.¹ Moreover, a whole mass of documentation survives to show the interest of the nobility in another direction - the acquisition of royal revenues.

It was this desperate search by the nobility for royal privileges which attracted my attention to the subject of this present thesis. The later middle ages in Castile witnessed /

¹ A general discussion on the scarcity of this kind of documentation in G. Duby, Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West (London, 1968), pp.289-90.

witnessed a revolution in the royal finances which was similar to that in France.¹ By the early fifteenth century the monarchy had at its disposal an impressive power to levy taxes without the consent of the cortes. Theoretically and in practice this added a great deal to the political and economic power of the monarchy. Yet the fifteenth century in Castilian history is usually depicted in terms of a weak monarchy which was threatened by nobles whose immense landed fortunes also allowed them to dominate the Church and the towns. Why, with such landed fortunes at their command, did the Castilian nobles seek so desperately to acquire royal revenues? What had happened to the Church and the towns?

An investigation into the wealth of the nobility, the Church, and the towns has to be related to the economic background. Indeed, the economic conjuncture forms the point of departure for such an investigation. The argument, when briefly stated, is deceptively simple. Monetary devaluations, a rise in the nominal price movement, and the decline in the manorial economy affected fixed incomes and provoked a political crisis. This situation was not peculiar /

1 The only study to throw light on this important subject is S. de Moxó, 'Ejército, diplomacia y finanzas como medios de acción del estado en la baja edad media', Studium (Bogotá, Colombia), iii (1959), 85-104.

peculiar to fifteenth century Castile. It seems likely that the origins of the problem can be traced back to the aftermath of the Black Death. Moreover there are close parallels to the situation in the kingdom of Portugal and in the Crown of Aragon, although in both these cases the political manifestations and the chronology of the crisis were different.¹ But it is fifteenth century Castile, and more particularly the reigns of John II and Henry IV, which will be examined in the following chapters.

¹ See V. Magalhães - Godinho, L'économie de l'empire portugais aux xve et xvie siècles (Paris, 1969), pp.40-1 and 147-57; P. Vilar, 'Le déclin catalan du bas moyen âge. Hypothèses sur sa chronologie'. E.H.M., vi (1956-9), 1-62.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMY

1. The Physical Environment¹

Castile was only one of five kingdoms in the Iberian peninsula in the later middle ages. In many ways a false impression is derived from treating this peninsula as a unit. The sea as well as the land served to unite economies and societies. Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia were linked to Italian centres as much as to other parts of Iberia. Granada was part of Africa. The Basques constituted a unique society within the kingdom of Castile and had strong maritime associations with the Bretons.

No doubt this picture is exaggerated. Yet the internal barriers to communications in the peninsula were formidable and Castile had possibly the worst share of the land division.

In the north, Castile was hemmed in by the Cordillera Cantábrica /

¹ For the following discussion see generally, A. Ferrari Nuñez, Castilla dividida en dominios (Madrid, 1958); J. García Fernández, Aspectos del paisaje agrario de Castilla la Vieja (Valladolid, 1963); J. García Fernández, 'Champs ouverts et champs clôturés', A.E.S.C., xx (1965), 692-718; R. Tamames, Estructura económica de España (Madrid, 1965), chap. i; P. Chaunu, 'Les Espagnes Périphériques' R.E.S., xli (1963), 145-82; M. Drain and P. Ponsot, 'Les paysages agraires de l'Andalousie Occidentale', M.C.V., ii (1966), 73-95.

Cantábrica and the Sistema Ibérico. To the east, the same Sistema Ibérico and the Serranía de Cuenca served to block off Castile from the Mediterranean coast. To the south, Castile was again hemmed in - this time by the Sierra Morena, the Sistema Bético and the Sistema Subético. Finally to the north west, Galicia and northern Portugal were cut off from Castile by a whole complex of mountain ranges from the Serra da Estrelha to the Montes de León.

Castile, in the centre, was isolated from what has been described as peripheral Spain. The coastal areas of the peninsula formed narrow and continuous strips. Geography helped to link the societies of these areas together. Thus Catalonia and Valencia were linked together and were part of the Crown of Aragon. Galicia was linguistically closer to Portugal than to Castile.

Yet, although geography does seem to impose a pattern which runs from north to south - Galicia and Portugal linked together, the kingdom of Castile from Bilbao down to Seville, and the Crown of Aragon from Barcelona down to Valencia - this pattern is only useful as an element of a much more complex picture. For there were just as formidable obstacles within the kingdom of Castile. The mountain barriers of the Sierra de Gata, the Sierra de Gredos which in the eleventh century had marked the frontier of the Reconquista; further south the Sistema Bético which marked the limit of the Reconquista in the later /

later middle ages. These barriers running from west to east, in conjunction with the timetable of the Reconquista, were profoundly to affect the social and even the ecclesiastical structure of the peninsula.

A high table land cut off from the narrow littorals. This picture too must be qualified. After all Castile did trade by sea with other parts of Europe. Access to the sea, however, was not facilitated by the river systems. At first sight the rivers Duero, Tagus, Gaudiana, and Guadalquivir might seem to present the natural means of communication - especially since the south west of the peninsula is the one area which does not present the formidable mountain barriers to the sea.

Yet of the rivers mentioned only the Guadalquivir was navigable. If the Tagus or Duero had been navigable then Lisbon or Oporto would have been the seaports for Castile. Even the Guadalquivir did not present as easy a means of communication as has sometimes been thought. Genoese ships preferred using Cádiz to Seville because of the difficulties in going up the river to Seville. Small boats, on the other hand, could and did use the Guadalquivir as far as Córdoba.¹

Lacking /

¹ J. Heers, Gênes au xv^e siècle (Paris, 1961), pp.294-5, 483-4. (Henceforth cited as Heers, Gênes). Cortes, ii, 95 (22,1351).

Lacking a river network for transport, Castile could nevertheless be linked up with the coast through the gaps in the mountain barriers. Bilbao could be reached from Burgos across the upper reaches of the Ebro. Murcia, Cartagena, and Valencia provided an outlet to the Mediterranean. Seville was linked to Córdoba. Hence the importance of the puertos or mountain passes which served as communication links, customs barriers and strategic military points. Through these passes merchandise was carried by muleteers and carters - a slow, laborious, and dangerous method of trade which only served to underline the superiority of the ships and the sea.¹

Climate and land also played an important part in determining economic activity. The pattern of rainfall today is extremely uneven. The north and west have the highest rainfall with Santiago de Compostela having an annual rainfall of sixtyfour inches. Moving south and east rain becomes less plentiful - thirtytwo inches in some parts of Extremadura, sixteen inches in eastern La Mancha, and as little as less than eight inches in some parts /

¹ Tolosa, for example, served as a puerto and tax collecting point for the trade from Navarre to the Cantabrian coast: Gorosábel, Bosquejo de la villa de Tolosa (Tolosa, 1853), pp.xvi-xviii. The strategic importance of the puertos near the Granadan frontier emerges very clearly in Cron. Lucas de Iranzo.

parts of south east Andalusia and Murcia. In the fifteenth century the parched and arid regions of the kingdom of Castile were not served by any extensive systems of irrigation. Elsewhere - notably in Valencia - systems of irrigation were inherited and maintained from the Moors, but in Castile only La Rioja and Seville seem to have enjoyed the benefits of some irrigation.¹ Indeed even today the tierras de secano - dry and unirrigated lands - constitute 95.5% of the cultivated areas of Castilla la Vieja.²

If rainfall is important so too is the nature of the land and the extremes in temperature. In 1890 Mallada made his famous analysis of the land which is still used by modern writers - 10% of Spanish land consists of bare rock, 35% consists of land which is barely productive because of its composition, altitude, or lack of rainfall, 45% is fairly productive land, and only 10% is good land.³ It is not surprising therefore to find that requests for economic privileges in the fifteenth century were often based on the sterility of the land and came from areas as far /

1 Vicens, Manual, p.230; C.D.R.A.H., pp.295-6 (lxxxix, 18 Feb. 1464).

2 García Fernández, op.cit., p.1.

3 Cited by J.H. Elliott, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716 (London, 1963), p.1 and R. Tamames, op.cit., p.6.

far apart as Plasencia, Vitoria and Alava.¹

In the north, especially in Guipuzcoa and the Basque country, the land is mountainous and stony. Further south much of the land of the meseta is also a land of climatic extremes. The winters are cold and the summers so hot that it is not surprising to read of soldiers on campaign going temporarily mad because of the heat and lack of water.² The harshness of the winters, the meagre rainfall, and the dry, long, and hot summers helped to determine the pattern of agrarian cultivation and techniques.³

Much of Castile was uncultivated. Little is known about the extent of forests in Castile. Pine forests existed round Moya and the Aragonese frontier. The naval dockyards at Seville were supplied with timber from the forests of Galicia. Extensive forests existed in the area roughly corresponding to the triangle formed by Toledo, Segovia and Avila.⁴ For most of the forest areas there is /

1 See, for example, E. Ibarra y Rodriguez, El problema cerealista en Espana durante el reinado de los Reyes Catolicos (Madrid, 1944), pp.42, 84; Gonzalez, Col. Cedula, iii, 47-51 (23 Dec.1475); Garcia de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.90-2.

2 Cron. Lucas de Iranzo, pp.82,320. Even in the north Rozmital and his entourage found the heat unbearable: The Travels of Leo of Rozmital, 1465-1467, ed. M.Letts (Hakluyt Society, cviii, 1955), 78-82. (Henceforth cited as Rozmital).

3 Garcia Fernandez, op.cit., passim.

4 Fragmentary evidence in Vicens, Historia, pp.275-6; Garcia de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.104-9; M.Lombard, 'Le bois dans la Mediterranee musulmane', A.E.S.C., xiv (1959), 234-54; Rozmital, p.8. Some interesting speculations on changes in the forestation of the Valladolid area in B. Bennassar, Valladolid au siecle d'or (Paris, 1967), pp. 31-9.

is evidence of some sort of royal forest administration.¹

It may be the case, however, that the extent of the forest areas and more especially the extent of deforestation in the late medieval period have been exaggerated. The climate and soil of Extremadura and La Mancha were incapable of supporting extensive forests.² In these hot and dusty areas of the Castilian meseta, grass and drought-resistant shrubs predominated. These grasslands of La Mancha and Extremadura, covering areas as wide apart as Badajoz and Albacete, were the lands that provided the greatest stimulus to concentrating economic activity on sheep. For the grass in these areas has a peculiar advantage in that it grows not only in spring but also in autumn. Hence the dehesas or tracts of pasture lands so often mentioned in the medieval documents dealing with these regions.³ Hence also the transhumance of sheep from the north to these southern grazing steppes.⁴

2. The Basic Products of the Economy

In fifteenth century Castile the difficulties of transportation /

1 For example Cortes, iii. 404 (6, 1442); C.D.R.A.H., 390-2 (cix, 1465)

2 For what follows see C.J. Bishko, 'The Castilian as Plainsman: The Medieval Ranching Frontier in La Mancha and Extremadura', in The New World Looks at its History, ed. A.R. Lewis and T.F. McGann (Texas, 1963), pp. 47-69 and E. Rodríguez Amaya, 'La Tierra en Badajoz (1230-1500)', R.E.E., Separata. (1952).

3 See below, pp. 312-5

4 Bishko, ubi supra, passim.

transportation were often greater than those presented by the nature of the soil and the climate. The contrasts, indeed, were great. Olive oil, for example, was exported in large quantities and yet the olive was cultivated, under adverse conditions, to the north of the present olive line. Similarly the growth of sheep ranching did not turn Castile into a pastoral and nomadic society: grain and bread still remained the peasant's first pre-occupation. Hence, although there was an increasing tendency towards economic specialisation, it is almost possible to talk in terms of closed economies as far as some areas of the kingdom are concerned.

The evidence shows that the grape was cultivated all over the kingdom of Castile - unlike the present day situation. The documents are conclusive on this point. For almost all areas from Puerto de Santa María in the extreme south, to Laredo, Castro Ordiales and Bermeo on the Basque coast, and from Vivero, Zamora, Salamanca and Plasencia in the west, to Medinaceli and the Aragonese frontier in the east, there is evidence for the cultivation of the vine.¹

Undoubtedly

¹ For the north coast see the ordinances of 1459 in M. Ciriquiain-Gaiztarro, Monografía histórica de Portugalete (Bilbao, 1942), pp.223-55. For Galicia, Cortes, ii. 68-9 (38,1351). For the frontiers of Aragon and Navarre, Cortes, ii. 60-1 (24,1351); A.D.M., Cog., leg.11, doc. 40 and Med., leg.4, doc.24. For other areas see the discussion which follows and, generally, García Fernández, op.cit., pp.8-20.

Undoubtedly there were areas which can be singled out for attention. On the whole they were the same areas that were to retain their importance into modern times as wine producing areas. Chief of these was the area round Jerez, Puerto de Santa María, and Sanlúcar de Barrameda.¹ The growth of these wine producing centres was fairly recent. In the thirteenth century, after the Reconquista, Gascon wines had to be imported into the south of Spain. Following the Reconquista, however, vineyards were planted and the importation of Gascon wines gradually declined and wine production was by the fifteenth century one of the chief occupations of the Jerez area.² Other important areas of wine production were to be found in La Mancha, La Rioja, Palencia, the area between Zamora and Valladolid, Madrid, Avila, Castellón, Toledo, Segovia, Córdoba and Jaén.³ Most of these areas retained their importance into the early modern period although some, for example Palencia, declined in the seventeenth century. Not that these areas were necessarily important for the quantity produced /

1 H. Sancho de Sopranis, Documentos para la historia del vino de Jerez (Jerez, 1957), passim. (Hereafter cited as Sancho, Documentos)

2 On these points see Y. Renouard, 'Le grande commerce des vins de Gascogne au moyen âge', R.H., ccxxi (1959), 261-304 and C. Verlinden, 'The rise of Spanish trade in the Middle Ages', Econ.H.R., x(1940), 44-59.

3 M. Grau, 'En torno al vino', E.S., iii (1951), 449-56; G. Herrero Martínez, 'El vino en Palencia', I.T.T.M., no.17 (1958), 17-41. The famous wines of the period are listed in Jorge Manrique's Coplas a una beuda que tenía empeñado un brial.

produced. In this respect no area could compete with Jerez, Puerto, and Sanlúcar. Some areas produced very little wine. This was true particularly in the extreme north. In Galicia and the Basque provinces the deficiency in wine production was compensated^{for} by the production of cider.¹ Here, what impressed Rozmital and his companions was not the sight of vineyards but the abundance of apple orchards:

Round about this town and in those mountains there is such a profusion of fruit trees as I have not seen in any other place. They plant them as we sow hemp. One townsman or peasant owns several thousands of them. The reason why they plant so many is that they have no wine or beer. They make a drink from apples. This district is surrounded by mountains and is called Biscaia.²

Of the different types of wine very little is known. Vino romanía was a much prized wine produced in the Jerez region.³ A vino torrontés produced in Jaén was also highly thought of and was made from a white - almost seedless - grape with a very delicate skin.⁴ In the centre and north of the kingdom the wines of Toro and Medina /

1 García Fernández, op.cit., p.11; García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.102-4.

2 Rozmital, p.77.

3 This wine may have been a variation of the vino bastardo produced in the south. There are conflicting opinions on the nature of this vino bastardo but the documentation, for example A.P.S. III, Francisco Sánchez, fo.31 (3 April 1472), suggests that there were several kinds of vino bastardo. See also J. Craeybecks, Un grand commerce d'importation; les vins de France aux anciens Pays-Bas, xiii^e-xvi^e siècles (Paris, 1958), p.13 note 40.

4 See the description by Carriazo in his prologue to Cron. Lucas de Iranzo, p.liii.

Medina were regarded as being especially excellent.¹

Few wines were allowed to mature and it is clear that although the word mosto existed, the word vino was often used to denote freshly made wine.²

Apart from vineyards, each village, each area, each town also had its own orchards - or huertas. As might be expected - because of the climate and the Moorish legacy - fruit and vegetables played a more important role in the south of Castile than in the north. In Galicia and the Basque provinces apples and pears predominated. In the south the variety was much greater both in fresh and dried fruits - apples, oranges, peaches, cherries, plums, melons, pomegranates, quince, figs, dates, raisins and almonds are among the products most often mentioned.³

In contrast to the orchards of the towns and villages, beekeeping was regionalised in those areas lacking population after reconquest. The most important areas were in effect /

1 García Fernández, op.cit., pp.11-13.

2 The white wine of Medina was one of the few which was allowed to mature, ibid, pp.12-13. The distinctions which were made between 'old' and 'new' wine may be misleading since 'old' wine may have matured for no longer than one year. See, for example, Cortes, ii. 60-1 (24,1351) and 172 (28,1369).

3 A.M.S., caja 1468-70, Condiciones de las impositions, deals with a 5% tax on fruit entering Seville and gives data on the orchards for two leagues round the town. See also Sancho, Documentos, pp.23-32 and Cron. Lucas de Iranzo, pp.33-4, 115, 138, 164, 433.

effect the Campo de Calatrava and Murcia. The beehives were situated in the hills and in tracts of uncultivated ground between Toledo and Ciudad Real, and in the deserted regions around Murcia. But although the activity was scattered over wide areas the beekeepers themselves were capable of banding together to protect their interests.¹

Wheat and barley were the most important agricultural crops.² Cereal production was important in the provincia of León, the tierra de campos area between Valladolid and Palencia, the lands round Burgos, the vast area of La Mancha, and lastly the areas round Córdoba such as Ecija, Carmona, and Aguilar. Guipúzcoa, Galicia, and the Basque provinces were seriously deficient in cereals. The Fuero of Vizcaya of 1452, for example, simply stated that

the land ... is very mountainous, grain is not sown or harvested, and it also lacks the other foods to maintain itself so that wheat, barley, meat, beans, and other vegetables are usually imported by sea.

Parts of Andalusia, including Seville, existed at a fitful level of subsistence, and Murcia perhaps also suffered from /

1 J. Torres Fontes, Estampas de la vida en Murcia (Madrid, 1965), 28-32 (Henceforth cited as Torres Fontes, Estampas); A.H.N., Cal., Pergs., Sec. dip., Reales, leg.4, no.245, containing an enquiry on the colmeneros of the Campo de Calatrava; L. Suárez Fernández, 'Evolución histórica de las hermandades castellanas', C.H.E., xvi(1951), pp.29-38.

2 For what follows see Ibarra y Rodríguez, op.cit., pp.16, 42-3, 68; and García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.89-99; and below pp.77-82.

from deficient cereal production.

There was, in short, a contrast of production between the central dry land area and the periphery. This was a pattern that also implied difficulties of production. For the 'bread carrying lands' (tierras de pan llevar) were also lands lacking irrigation and moisture. Given the quality of the land and the climate grain production was largely based on the año y vez system.¹ This system - still prevalent today in many areas of Castile - entailed ploughing the land every year but only sowing every alternate year. In some areas the land rested fallow for even longer periods. Hence in the systems known as cultivo al tercio, al cuarto, and al quinto, the units of land only produced a harvest every three, four, and five years respectively.² These systems no doubt reflected the poverty of a soil which lacked a suitable chemical content for more intensive grain production.³ They also, however, reflected a need for pasture lands for livestock. These were systems which, to a greater or lesser extent, allowed a balance to be achieved /

1 García Fernández, op.cit., pp.29-37.

2 Ibid, pp.37-43.

3 Ibid, pp.28-31, 37.

achieved between the needs of the soil and an agricultural and pastoral economy.¹

The rise of 'the pastoral society' can be traced back to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.² It has been argued that the boom in sheep farming was due to the expanding markets for wool and to a switch from an agricultural to a pastoral economy as a consequence of the Black Death. There may be some truth in this but, on the whole, these arguments appear unconvincing. Far more important was the change in the physical environment brought about by the Reconquista which led to ranching on a wide scale. Ranching had, of course, existed in the north before the reconquest of the Extremadura and La Mancha regions. But it had been a limited affair with livestock being kept close to the towns and alternating between the lowland and the highland pastures of the locality. With the reconquest of Extremadura and La Mancha, however, the dehesas of these regions opened up the possibilities of alternating winter and summer pastures throughout wide areas. So began the organization of transhumance /

1 Ibid., pp.31-2, 36, 38-42. This view of these systems as being empirically sound should, however, be qualified by noting the primitive burning of vegetation practised in parts of Galicia, León, and Asturias, the lack of irrigation, and the remarkable absence of windmills: J.L. Martín Galindo, 'Los cultivos sobre cenizas en la provincia de León', A.L., vii (1953), 78-95; Ibarra y Rodríguez, op.cit., pp.120-1.

2 For what follows see generally J. Klein, The Mesta (Cambridge, Mass., 1920); Bishko, ubi supra, passim; Vicens, Historia, ii.277-84; Vicens, Manual, pp.230-6.

transhumance on a large scale until, by 1467, there were at least some 3,000,000 sheep involved.

Sheep farming on this scale obviously required organization. One need was for protection. This was provided by the bands of guards (rafala or esculca) who conveyed the sheep to the pasture grounds. The Mesta, probably originating from somewhere in the period between 1260-65, existed primarily to organize the sheep walks or cañadas which allowed transhumance between the northern and southern pastures.

The areas of sheep farming and the routes of transhumance were situated as follows. In the north the centres of organization were León, Soria, Segovia, and Cuenca. The southern pastures were located in Extremadura and La Mancha. The routes or sheep walks collected sheep as far north as León and Logroño and moved them south into La Mancha, Extremadura, and Andalusia - as far south as Córdoba and Murcia.

Sheep, of course, were not the only livestock in Castile. Even camels were to be found in the south. But the relative importance of the different forms of livestock may, perhaps, be deduced from the royal documents granting exemption from royal taxes on livestock. Here are some examples. The figures refer to the number of animals /

animals exempted from taxation:¹

The monastery of Guadalupe

2,000 sheep
800 cattle (cows, bulls)
500 pigs
50 horses

The monastery of La Vid

5,000 sheep
400 cattle
200 pigs
20 horses

The monastery of Santa María de Parases

3,000 sheep
1,500 cattle
800 pigs
500 horses

The count of Medinaceli

5,000 sheep
1,000 cattle
600 pigs

The master of Calatrava

12,000 sheep
2,000 cattle
2,000 pigs

These examples are taken from areas where sheep farming was the predominant economic activity. In other areas - especially the extreme north - sheep must have played a much more insignificant role. It is, however, interesting to note that even in a region like Jerez where ranching was definitely not the primary economic activity, sheep /

34 The figures are from royal privileges in Escorial, Z.l.8., fos. 242d-246a; A.D.M., Med., leg.40, doc.50; A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.118.

sheep still predominated. Thus in the Jerez area in 1491 a count of livestock revealed the following figures:¹

28,592 sheep
17,840 cattle
4,930 pigs
1,662 horses
3,850 goats

Of the many salt producing areas in the kingdom of Castile the most important were probably Salinas de Léniz, Rosío, Poza, Añana, Avilés, Villafáfila, San Felices, Atienza, Espartinas, La Mata and Torrevieja. Of these, none - except perhaps La Mata - were as important as Setubal in Portugal.²

How was this salt produced? The only contemporary description that exists is one which deals with salt production at Rosío.

Two miles away is a place belonging to the same count where salt is made, hardened by the sun, in this way: water is conducted into a small pond or basin and is left there for some time until it thickens and grows hard, so that salt is produced in the likeness of stone.³

It seems probable that the same system applied to the other salt producing areas inland, and also, with adaptations /

1 Sancho, *Historia*, i.62.

2 See generally R. Pastor de Togneri, 'La sal en Castilla y León', *C.H.E.*, xxxvii-xxxviii (1963), 42-87; M. Gual Camarena, 'Para un mapa de la sal hispana en la edad media', in *Homenatge a Jaume Vicens Vives*, i (Barcelona, 1965), 483-97. For the location of salines and documentary references see below pp. 225-6 and Map 1.

3 *Rozmital* p.83.

adaptations, to the salines of the southern coast. There are indications, however, that brine or sea water may have been boiled in the Seville area.¹

There was also a significant difference in the distribution of the salines in Castile. Generally the north and east - and especially the north east - were well provided with salines. But the area round León, and the whole area from Salamanca to Badajoz were far away from the centres of production. To a certain extent this was alleviated by Villafafila and also by a saline somewhere on the Castilian side of the Portuguese border. Yet the fact remains that the west and parts of the south of Castile were poorly provided. It is true that there were salines in the south but it would appear that their production was not significant. Córdoba and Alcaudete certainly seem to have been of little importance. Seville, at the beginning of the fifteenth century had to construct new salines on the Isla Mayor in the marismas because of the grave shortage of salt in the previous years.²

Salt, of course, was a peculiarly important ingredient in the medieval diet - meat, fish, butter, even cheese /

1 A.M.S., caja 1416-17, no.160, lists calderas and calderones among the items for the construction of salines in 1412 and 1413. It is hard to envisage what these were intended for except boiling.

2 A.M.S., caja 1416-17, no.160, relates the discussions on the problem of the salt supply for Seville and the choice of an area for the construction of a new saline.

cheese, were preserved by using salt. Yet in the south, olive oil could be used, to a certain extent, as a substitute for salt. Certainly olive oil was part of the staple diet of the Castilians. Schaseck, with pardonable exaggeration, alleged 'that the peasants do not know what butter or cheese is like. In place of butter they use olive oil of which there is abundance',¹ There was an abundance of olive oil - especially in the south.² The financial administration in the south had a special section to deal with the taxes on olive oil. Even the Crown, collecting and storing thirteen hundred-weights of olive oil in the years 1428-32, played a part in this trade.³ In 1412 alone the town council of Seville sold twenty tons of olive oil in order to raise some desperately needed money.⁴ And in the south olive oil was often used instead of salt to preserve fish. This was certainly true of the flourishing tunny fisheries round Cádiz - despite the fact that Cádiz was itself a salt producing area.⁵

Fish /

¹ Rozmital, p.85.

² The olive 'line' in modern times has been marked by the central cordillera. In the medieval period the olive was cultivated in the north in Castilla la Vieja where, today, only 0.3% of the cultivated area is dedicated to the olive: García Fernández, op.cit., pp.1-6.

³ For examples of the place of oil in the royal administration, A.D.M., Priego, leg.38, doc.37 and Med., leg. 25, doc.8; Cortes, iii. 556-7 (52,1447). Figures for 1428-32 in A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.12.

⁴ A.M.S., caja 1412-13, no.138.

⁵ See, for example, Heers, Gênes, pp.488-9.

Fish seems to have played an extremely important part in the Castilian's diet. Even such inland towns as Jaén, Burgos, Córdoba, Villalón and Guadalupe, were well supplied with fish. The variety of fish mentioned by the documents is bewildering although only a few seem to have been caught in significant quantities.¹ Sardine fishing was important on both the northern and southern coasts.² Whaling was important on the northern coast in almost all areas from Galicia to St. Jean de Luz.³

But undoubtedly the most important fisheries were the tunny fisheries of the south. As Heers has pointed out, the importance of the tunny fisheries can hardly be exaggerated.⁴ The almadrabas or tunny fisheries were situated in the areas round Conil, Rota, and Cádiz. That wars were fought between the southern nobility to control these fisheries is hardly surprising.⁵ As early as 1441 complicated transactions involving the tunny fish of these /

1 Cod, haddock, mackerel, shad, dog fish, sea bream, octopus, lampreys, trout, salmon, eels, rayas, doradas, zapateras, and chicharros are mentioned.

2 Sardines were important enough to be treated as separate items of trade and taxation. For example, A.G.S., Exp. Hac., leg.2, no.205, deals with sardine trade in Galicia while A.M.S., cajas 1433-5, 1454-6, and 1468-70 contain condiciones for the farm of taxes on sardines and 'other fish'.

3 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.114-7 and Ciriquiain-Gaiztarro, op.cit., pp.77-9.

4 Heers, Gênes, pp.488-9.

5 Evidence of such warfare in the 1470s in R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483 which contains a royal confirmation of a settlement of this question, 28 Aug.1474. Henry IV himself made a special visit to see the tunny fisheries: Mem.Divs.Hass., p.36 and Cron. Lucas de Iranzo, p.xl.

these areas can be found.¹ In 1475, 982 barrels were sold in Sanlúcar de Barrameda to Genoese merchants.² In October 1480, seventy barrels were sold to two Venetian merchants.³ But the importance of the fisheries is, perhaps, best underlined by the continuous stream of boatmen who carried barrels and staves to the fisheries from Seville.⁴

Castile imported cloth from England, Flanders, Brabant and France. To the east, in the Crown of Aragon, there were important textile centres in Barcelona, Gerona, Lérida, and Valencia. To the south, Granada, Málaga, Tunis, Fes, Rabat and Marrakech were important silk manufacturing centres. Yet, despite this, the textile industry was the most important industry in Castile - a fact which underlines the lack of development in Castilian industries generally.⁵

Silks and velvets were produced in Seville, Córdoba, and /

1 A.P.S., V. Gonzalo Bernal, fo.51v. (20 Sept.1441): an official of the count of Niebla orders Pedro Rodriguez, merchant of Seville, to pay 4,164 ms to Pedro de Soto from money owed for purchases from the almadraba.

2 A.P.S., iv. Pedro Alvarez, fo.247 (29 Nov.1475).

3 Ibid., fo.411v (2 Oct.1480).

4 Ibid., fos.268v-274v, for example, shows that between 16-19 June 1475 three boatmen carried 105 barrels and a boatload of staves to the Conil almadrabas.

5 For what follows see the valuable, but badly organized, information in F.L.May, Silk Textiles of Spain. (New York, 1957), pp.60-2, 102, 108, 131, 160-1, 174, 193-4, 201, 223-5 and Vicens, Manual, pp.237-8.

and above all Toledo. From Toledo plain coloured velvets, velvets in a two colour combination, silks embellished with gold and silver threads, figured silks, satins, damasks, and gold and velvet brocades supplied a market in which the Church was the chief customer. Sendal - which could denote a very fine linen as well as a light silk tissue - was produced in Toledo and Cuenca.

Silks and velvets were, of course, expensive and valuable fabrics. With the cheaper fabrics it is hard to elucidate the differences which lie behind the Castilian names for the various cloths. Woollen cloth (paños de lana, frisas) was produced in Córdoba, Murcia and certain unidentified areas in the bishoprics of Osma, Sigüenza, and Calahorra.¹ Seville also produced linen cloth (lienços), cloth made from hemp (cañamo) and fustian. Palencia and Zamora produced a cloth known as picote which was probably of an extremely coarse texture.²

There is little information on the size of the Castilian cloth industry and the techniques of production. There is evidence that fitful attempts were made to foment the industry. In the cortes of Toledo in 1462 it was agreed /

1 For Osma, Sigüenza, and Calahorra see fos.68R and 69R of the Cuaderno of Diezmos of 1457 in Escorial, x.11.14., fos.57R-104V.

2 Cuaderno of Alcabalas of 1438, Escorial, z.1.8., fos. 246R-268R.

agreed to reserve a fixed proportion of wool for the home market.¹ As early as 1409 Seville granted fiscal privileges to five wool dressers, five weavers, two dyers and four merchants, as an incentive to produce cloth made from hemp. A similar provision, this time relating to the production of woollen cloths, can be found for Córdoba.² In Murcia complicated regulations - dealing with dyes, prices, and the technique of dyeing - were drawn up in 1431 and revised in 1442.³ Documents, but dating from the end of the century, also seem to imply a fairly complex organization in Seville.⁴ For the present that is all the evidence that can be put forward. Can this evidence support assertions that 450,000 pounds of silk were used in Toledo in 1480, and that towards the end of the century there were 13,000 looms in Toledo, 38,000 textile workers (no less!) in Segovia and 130,000 textile workers in Seville in 1519?⁵

Cloth making centres covered most of the country.

Other industries tended to be highly localized. Of these one /

1 Cortes, iii, 721-4 (27,1462).

2 A.M.S., caja 1408-9, no.91 and A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.82, fol.8R.

3 Torres Fontes, Estampas, vi, 10-20.

4 For example the formation of a compania in 1489 between a master silk weaver of Seville and a silk spinner from Valencia, the purchase of 50 loads of pastel tolosano by one Seville dyer alone in 1489, and a contract of 1480 for the finishing of cloth over a period of one year: A.P.S., III, Anton Ruiz de Porras, fos.168v and 275 and ibid, IV, Pedro Alvarez, fo.367.

5 Figures from May, op.cit., pp.223-5; C.Espejo and J. Paz, Las Antiguas Ferias de Medina del Campo (Valladolid, 1908), p.177. See also the comments of Vicens, Manual, p.238.

one of the most important was soap.¹ This industry was lucrative enough for it to be coveted by the highest nobility and to be involved in the confiscations attached to the inevitable purges during the fifteenth century civil wars. Centred on the Seville area, it earned for the Sevillanos the nickname of jaboneros, or soap makers, in the literature of the period.² The soap - both black and white - was made from olive oil. The making of the soap itself was naturally farmed out by the nobles who monopolised the industry. The Triana district of Seville was the centre for the production and storing of soap, but soap was also made outside Seville in Castil de las Guardas, Aznalcázar, Sanlúcar la Mayor, Lebrija, and Alcalá de Guadaira.

Castile held the monopoly of mercury since it was virtually the only significant producer in Europe. The mercury mines at Almadén, in the deserted area to the west of Ciudad Real, also produced vermillion. Both these commodities were in great demand abroad but, as will be seen in a later chapter, the Castilians themselves failed to /

1 The data that follows is taken from A.D.M., Alc.Duc., leg.55, docs.16-27, 29-30, 32-4, 36, 38; ibid, leg.56, docs.2-4, 6, 10-12, 14, 18; A.M.S., caja 1405-6, nos. 70, 90, 129, 131, 132; ibid, caja 1406-7, no.58; ibid, caja 1407-8, no.85; A.P.S., III. Anton Ruiz de Porras, fo.259v. For noble monopolies see below pp.143-6.

2 See Diego Catalán Menéndez-Pidal, "Nunca viera jaboneros tan bien vender su jabón". Romance histórico del rey don Pedro, del año 1357', Bol.R.A.E., xxxii(1952), 233-45.

to exploit their monopolistic position properly.¹ Iron was mined in Guipúzcoa and the Basque provinces. Some iron manufactures were produced in these areas but on the whole the iron that was mined was intended for export.² Alum was far less important. Documents hint at several possible areas of production in the kingdom of Murcia but the main centre of production was Mazarrón. Production was, however, on a small scale except perhaps during the short period of crisis in the European alum market between the fall of Phocaea in 1455 and the discovery of the Tolfa mines in 1462.³

Another important industry was the leather industry which thrived in the archbishopric of Seville and bishopric of Cádiz. Perhaps 'industry' is too optimistic a word to use. It is true, for example, that there were a good many craftsmen such as shoemakers and wine skin makers in Seville who must have relied on these areas for their leather. On the whole, however, the leather was exported as a raw material. The importance of the operation in leather emerges quite clearly from the documents. As with soap and tunny fish the great noble families /

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- 1 A. Matilla Tascón, Historia de las minas de Almadén (Madrid, 1958); Heers, Gênes, p.490; see below p.411
 2 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.123-41; I. Zumalde, Historia de Oñate (San Sebastián, 1957), chaps. i-ii.
 3 Torres Fontes, Estampas, vi.16; Torres Fontes, Don Pedro Fajardo (Madrid, 1953), p.87 (Henceforth cited as Torres Fontes, Fajardo); B.N., MS., 887, fos.423R-425V.

families of the south tried to establish monopolies on leather. Both Henry IV and the pretender, Alfonso XII, tried to create monopolies in favour of their supporters.¹ Moreover when transactions involving sixty tons of leather skins could be made in Seville,² it is not surprising that the town council should try to raise revenue by taxing the leather trade.³

Other industries, which may have been important but about which little is known, included ceramics in the south, paper at Toledo and silverwork in Valladolid.⁴

Inevitably the main economic activities and the most important centres of production have been emphasised. Yet mixed economics prevailed in most areas of the kingdom.⁵ Sheep farming and grain production existed side by side. Without such a balance where would the Castilians obtain their grain? They certainly could not obtain it from Catalonia, Valencia, Andalusia or the Basque provinces and, although the periphery could import wheat from abroad, this was certainly not the case for the regions of the centre. It is true that complaints were /

1 See C.D.R.A.H., 381-2 (cix, 1465) and R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483, no. 291.

2 Sale of cueros vacunos al pelo by Juan Tristán of Seville to Juan de Nájera, merchant of Burgos: A.P.S., III, Anton Ruiz de Porras, fo. 71 (18 May 1489).

3 A.M.S. caja 1404-5, no. 97 and caja 1454-9, docs. on the impusiciones.

4 Espejo and Paz, op.cit., p. 188; Vicens, Manual, p. 239.

5 This, indeed, is the whole argument of García Fernández, op.cit., passim.

were occasionally made about the damage caused to agriculture by sheep, but these complaints were never as numerous as might be supposed.¹ Some complaints were made by villagers who wanted to use pasture for their own livestock and resented the competition from outside interests. Yet the really violent antagonism did not come from the villagers. On the contrary, the violent clashes were between two separate ranching interests. For the northern and southern ranchers fought for possession of the rich pasture lands in La Mancha and Extremadura. Hence the violent methods used by the southerners in their fight against the Mesta which essentially protected the interests of the transhumant sheep of the northerners.²

3. The Conditions for Trade within the Kingdom

On first analysis the obstacles to the development of trade in Castile seemed unsurmountable. Everything seemed calculated to block the flow of an interchange of goods and produce.

There /

¹ For an example of such a complaint, Cortes, ii.25-6 (44,1351).

² Bishko, ubi supra, p.63.

There was no uniform system of weights and measures. From Alfonso X to Philip II the Crown and the cortes tried to bring about some unification of the various systems existing. In the cortes of Madrid of 1435 a uniform system was, theoretically, established. The weight of gold and silver was to be determined by the systems prevailing in Toledo and Burgos respectively. Similarly, for example, the Toledo system with regard to wine, and the Avila system with regard to bread, were to be enforced throughout the kingdom. Yet despite this laudable attempt to produce one uniform system, and despite confirmations in 1462, 1476 and 1496, the whole system of weights and measures had still not been unified by the reign of Philip II.¹

Taxes were the greatest obstacle to trade. In the first place there was the percentage sales tax, or alcabala, which theoretically applied to the whole kingdom. Customs duties were also important. On the north coast they were known as the diezmos de la mar de Castilla. Similar customs duties existed on the Aragonese frontier and, to a lesser extent, on the Portuguese frontier. In the south a different tax - the almojarifazgo - served the same purpose. On the Moorish frontier there were further customs duties known as diezmo e medio diezmo de lo /

¹ Espejo and Paz, op.cit., p.209; Ibarra y Rodríguez, op.cit., p.105.

lo morisco. Finally the levying of taxes on sheep - servicio and montazgo - and some other less prevalent taxes, such as the portazgo, should be noted.¹

Municipal and seigneurial tolls on goods in transit also directly affected trade. A good many of these were of doubtful legality and, because of this, these were the taxes which were most bitterly resented. Levied near castles, at fords, ferries, rivers, bridges, town boundaries, and seigneurial estates they caused continued protests to be made at the meetings of the cortes.² The majority of these taxes were levied without royal consent, licence, or privilege. Declared illegal, the taxes - portazgo, roda, castellaje, asadura, pasaje, peaje, barcaje, pontaje - continued to be exacted on all passing merchandise. The size of the problem is difficult to envisage. These were arbitrary taxes varying in amount and varying in location. A provisional count of places legally levying only one of these taxes, the portazgo, gives a figure of forty.³

The /

1 There is no study of these taxes for the later middle ages but see the excellent discussion by R. Carande, Carlos V y sus Banqueros, ii (Madrid, 1949), chaps. V-XX and S. Moxó, La alcabala (Madrid, 1963).

2 Cortes iii. 75 (24, 1433), 347-50 (42, 1438), 428 (26, 1442), 634 (46, 1455), 699-700 (27, 1455), 711 (13, 1462), 797-8 (15, 1469), 843-5 (5, 1473), 868-70 (18 and 19, 1473). A fairly detailed example of merchants' criticisms in the Cuaderno in González, Col. Cédulas, i. 1-28 and an account of the vexations involved in Rozmital, pp. 78-9, 82-3.

3 The figure of forty results from a quick review of the documentation and is, therefore, a very conservative estimate.

The economic policy of the Crown also seemed to lay an intolerable burden on trade. There were finicky and detailed regulations intended to make the levying of taxes easier. Cloth made in Palencia and Zamora had to be registered in case alcabalas were evaded. Grain and bread coming into Seville could only enter by the three gates of Triana, Carmona, and the Macarena. Cattle near the frontiers of Aragon, Navarre and Portugal had to be registered. Each saline had its marketing area carefully limited.¹

As far as general economic policy is concerned, however, the main effort was directed at preventing the export of what were deemed vital commodities. Chief of these were gold, silver and money.² As might be expected, allegations were made about the steady drain of gold and silver to the Papal Court, Portugal and Aragon. To avoid the drain of gold and silver it was stipulated, as a general rule, that foreign merchants should register their goods on arrival and, on departure, should only take with them an equivalent amount of Castilian merchandise.³ Other products, the export of which was generally /

1 These examples are taken from Escorial, Z.1.8., fos. 231v-233v, 249d-250a and Cortes, iii. 307-10 (41,1436), 366-7 (59,1438).

2 On this Cortes, iii. 65-6 (22,1425), 660-1 (15,1453), 693-4 (20,1455).

3 Cortes, iii. 18-19 (15,1419) and M. Bataillon, 'Vendeja', Hisp. Rev., xxvii (1959), 228-45.

generally forbidden, included horses, bread, wheat, barley, rye, vegetables and all forms of livestock. The ordinances were especially emphatic about horses and grains, and especially emphatic about the prohibition with regard to the kingdom of Granada. Prohibited imports included wine, vinegar and salt.¹

It would be a mistake, however, to take into account only the economic policy of the Crown. For the striking feature was the extent to which local or regional economic policies vitiated any coherent overall policy.

The extent to which the economies of the areas under the jurisdiction of towns and lords was regulated appears really formidable.² Price fixing occurred frequently. Regulations relating to the entry and marketing of merchandise were legion. So too were attempts to cut out the regateros or middlemen. Even the control of production itself was not uncommon. Thus the town council of Sahagún fixed prices for oil, butter, candles, and sardines.³ The town council of Villalón determined the price of fish.⁴ Ships arriving at Portugulete could not sell /

1 A.D.M., Priego, leg.14, doc.3; ibid, Med., leg.59, doc. 25; Cortes, ii. 433-49 (1390); ibid, iii. 721-4 (27-8, 1462); Y. Renouard, 'L'exportation de chevaux de la péninsule ibérique au moyen âge', in Homenatge a Jaume Vicens Vives, i (Barcelona, 1965), 571-77.

2 An outstanding example was the municipal control over the meat market and prices in Segovia: M. Grau, 'Las carnicerías de Segovia en el siglo xv', E.S., viii (1956), 205-13.

3 A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.943, doc.7.

4 R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, B, fos.iv-2R.

sell their merchandise in bulk for nine days in order to prevent prices rising at resale. The same town had an extremely complicated system for the marketing of goods.¹ Most towns tried to regulate harvesting. Some towns went further. Jerez laid down detailed regulations on the harvesting of grapes, the techniques of making raisins, the size of barrels, and even the type of seal to be used on the barrels.²

Such examples could be cited endlessly. But what is important here is to stress the degree to which the local economic policies clashed with each other. For example Bilbao and Portugalete had a long and acrimonious dispute about the levying of taxes on ships; but despite attempts to solve the problem, in 1463 and 1473, ships going up the river to Bilbao had to pay two lots of taxes - one at Portugalete and one at Bilbao.³ Two commodities, wine and grain, were generally affected by such clashes of interest.

In the case of wine the problem was one of protecting the local producer. Hence the regulations made - by Segovia, Avila, Sepúlveda, Villalón, Seville, Palencia - to prevent competition from outside.⁴ In the majority of /

1 Ordinances of Portugalete in Ciriquiain-Gaiztarro, op. cit., pp.223-55.

2 Sancho, Documentos, pp.19-32.

3 Ciriquiain-Gaiztarro, op.cit., pp.62-7.

4 M. Grau, 'En torno al vino', E.S., iii (1951), 449-56; Marqués de Foronda, 'Las Ordenanzas de Avila', B.R.A.H., lxxi (1917), 381-425, 463-520; Col.Dip.Sepúlveda, i, 358-64, doc.111 (1 May 1415); R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, A, fos.14v-15R, B, fos.4R and v; yearly conditions for the farm of municipal revenues, A.M.S., passim; Martínez de Azcoitia, ubi supra, 17-41.

of cases this was attempted by simply forbidding the importation of wine into the area until home production had been used up. In some cases, for example Seville, a solution was attempted by imposing a special tax on imported wine, mosto, and grapes.

The case of grain and bread presents an almost complete contrast. Regulations, in this case, aimed at protecting the consumer and not the producer. Invariably the export of grain outside the area was prohibited without special permission. The reason is obvious. The sale of grain to areas hit by bad harvests produced large profits but was detrimental to the area of production. In areas perpetually short of grain elaborate provisions were made to attract grain. Portugalete, for example, decreed that nothing could be sold to muleteers from outside the region unless they brought grain or flour in exchange. That these regulations were not empty formulae - especially in years of crisis - can be seen in the measures taken to enforce the regulations. Seville sometimes had a whole army of officials, working on land and sea, trying to prevent the escape of wheat and barley out of the large area under its jurisdiction. At the same time attempts were made to persuade other areas to relax exactly /

exactly the same policies so that grain could be imported.¹

Despite the obstacles which hampered trade there were certain favourable factors.

In the first place there was the great mass of privileges acquired by towns and individuals which, once given, were confirmed by successive monarchs. Thus the trading privileges given to the town of Lequeito by Ferdinand IV (1295-1312) were still confirmed by Philip II in 1564.² A privilege given to the town of Caso in 1447, and involving similar privileges, was repeatedly confirmed down to 1817 and the reign of Ferdinand VII.³ But here the problem is to try and deduce a pattern of factors which benefited trade. Such a pattern did exist. Above all it benefited the coastal regions of the north and the south.

The extreme north and the extreme south of the kingdom of Castile were not grain producing areas. A whole series of special privileges were therefore intended to alleviate this situation. Foreign merchants bringing grain to the southern ports were not subject to the rule that an equivalent amount of Castilian merchandise had to be /

1 For grain policy in the Medinaceli estates, A.D.M., Med., leg.50, doc.7. For Córdoba, A.D.M., Priego, leg.14, doc.3. For Portugalete, Ciriquiain-Gaistarro, *op.cit.*, pp.227-9. Many of the Seville documents cited in Appendix A deal with these attempts to control the saca de pan: see below pp.554-6.

2 González, *Col.Cédulas*, i. 420-3 (12 July 1334).

3 O. Armayor, 'El privilegio de Caso', *B.I.E.A.*, x (1956), 136-54.

be exported. Merchants bringing grain to Seville were given preferential tax treatment. In many places in the north too - Bilbao, Bermeo, Castro Ordiales - customs duties and regulations were relaxed in order to allow for a sufficiency of food supplies. All of Guipúzcoa, for example, was exempted from the customs taxes on food supplies in the bishoprics of Calahorra, Osma and Sigüenza.¹

Royal policy also clashed with municipal policies with regard to the free circulation of grain. As has been shown, many towns tried to protect themselves by prohibiting - at least in theory - inter-regional trade in wheat and barley. The Crown, on the other hand, consistently asserted (both in ordinances and in the cortes) the principle of unrestricted internal trade in grain supplies.² Nor were these merely vague declarations of intent, for attempts were made to break down the resistance of the towns. John II, for example, wrote to the town of Córdoba ordering the officials to allow grain to be sent to Seville,³ and Henry IV sent a sharp letter on the same subject to the town council of Jerez.⁴ No doubt /

1 Evidence for these points in González, Col.Cédulas, i. 1-28, 52-3; ibid, iii.34; Cortes, iii.91 (27,1430), 260-3 (3,1436); Escorial, Z.I.8., fo.246d; Bataillon, ubi supra, 228-45.

2 Cortes, ii. 26-7 (45,1351); ibid, iii.664 (19,1453), 694-5 (20,1455), 720-1 (26,1462); C.D.R.A.H., 416-7 (cix,1465); A.Sierra Corella, 'Libro cartulario de jurados de Toledo', B.R.A.H., xciv (1939), 193-213.

3 A.D.M., Priego, leg.14, doc.3.

4 A.M.J., Actas Caps., session of 8 March 1455.

doubt the reason for this was partly military. The Moorish frontier had to be populated and the garrisons provisioned. Hence the exemptions from taxation, the attempts to secure a steady supply of provisions, and the suspension of all taxes on the movement of provisions when any major campaign was mounted against the kingdom of Granada.¹

Royal policy, however, did not merely benefit the northern and southern periphery in relation to grain supplies. Both areas were also incidentally favoured by other factors. Basque trade must have benefited from the almost total immunity from taxation which the Basques enjoyed. Guipúzcoa enjoyed immunity from customs duties for its imports and exports. In the south, Cádiz was a 'free' port and Henry IV is alleged to have given complete freedom of trade to ports like Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Huelva, Ayamonte, Lepe and La Redondela.² Even trade on a large scale with the kingdom of Granada was sometimes sanctioned by the Crown. As early as 1310 at least, treaties between Castile and Granada made provision for trade across the frontier. By the fifteenth century quite /

1 One of many examples on the privileged position of towns on the frontier is the privilege to the towns of Alcalá la Real, Antequera, Teba, 'y otras villas y logares de moros' in A.D.M., Priego, leg.40, doc.72. An example of suspension of all taxes for military purposes in A.M.S., caja 1409-10, no.83.

2 González, Col.Cédulas, iii. 47-51; A.M.J., caja 1, no. 36 de orden 338; Bataillon, ubi supra, passim; C.D.R.A.H., 427-8 (cix,1465).



quite positive measures were taken to protect this trade. In the treaty of 1439 the Crown selected three specific areas in frontier bishoprics where Christians, Jews, and Moors could safely trade with each other under royal protection.¹

It could be maintained that royal policy also helped the economy of the interior in two specific ways - by protecting the pastoral economy and by protecting the fairs. Both these points, however, need re-examination. Certainly the owners of the really large flocks of sheep must have benefited from the privileges which granted them exemptions from the servicio and montazgo taxes. Yet these privileges were not granted for economic reasons.² Indeed even the connection between the Crown and the Mesta seems to have become completely vague and tenuous. Nor is there any real evidence to support the view that the fairs benefited to any great extent from royal protection. True, there is an impressive catalogue of royal privileges which give permission to found fairs and markets, and which give immunities of one sort or another to the fairs and the merchants going to them. Thus /

1 The scale of trade naturally depended on the state of diplomatic relations and customs duties were accordingly adjusted: see, for example, A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.2, no. 24. For the treaties and a detailed picture of frontier complications, J. de Mata Carriazo, 'Un alcalde entre los cristianos y los moros', Al-And., xiii (1948), 35-96 and the same, 'Relaciones fronterizas entre Jaen y Granada', R.A.B.M., lxi (1955), 23-51.

2 At least not for any that can be discerned.

Thus, Brihuega was founded by Henry I (1214-1217), and Burgos was founded by Alfonso XI in 1339. These were intended to be big fairs. Grants for smaller local markets were not lacking either. Henry IV, for example, granted Toledo and Villagarcía the privilege of holding a mercado franco once a week.

These privileges were not, of course, unimportant. Merchants were generally guaranteed freedom from arrest for such things as debts and were generally granted exemption from paying alcabalas. The lack of restrictions attracted merchants, tended for an increase in population, and caused the procuradores to complain of the leniency with which foreign merchants were treated.

Yet the most important fair of all, Medina del Campo, was not a royal creation. Nor were the seigneurial fairs of Villalón and Medina de Ríoseco which ranked next in importance after Medina del Campo. Indeed the activities of the nobility in stimulating and protecting seigneurial fairs caused frequent and bitter complaints to be made in the cortes.¹

On balance therefore, it would appear that there was a whole series of barriers and impediments to trade.

How /

¹ See generally Espejo and Paz, op.cit., chaps. i and ii. There are, of course, many privileges of markets and fairs. The examples of Toledo and Villagarcía from A.G.S., Exp.Hac., leg.2, no.187; R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483, no.259; E. Benito Ruano, Toledo en el siglo xv (Madrid, 1961), 89. (Henceforth cited as Benito Ruano, Toledo) Complaints of the procuradores in Cortes, iii, 77 (41, 1425), 89-90 (25,1430), 103 (16,1431), 260-3 (3,1436), 633-4 (45,1451), 656-7 (9,1453), 706-7 (5,1462).

How did the merchant manage to deal with these obstacles?

There is plenty of evidence to show that smuggling, fraud, and corruption were frequent. It was an easy matter to avoid the royal tax officials. Jerez, for example, had a special privilege which exempted merchandise needed by the town from taxes and customs duties. Merchandise which arrived at the ports of Cádiz and Puerto de Santa María, therefore, was nominally sent to Jerez in order to avoid payment of duties. Once in Jerez the merchandise was redistributed further inland. Taxes levied inland could also be easily avoided. Merchants in Seville, who wanted to send goods to Medina del Campo, avoided taxes levied in the Seville area by first of all sending the goods to areas within the town's jurisdiction; from these areas it was easy to transfer the goods past the town boundaries and tax officials. Further north, cloth was smuggled into Castile across the Aragonese frontier. Small wonder that the procuradores of the cortes complained repeatedly about smuggling. At one stage it was suggested that, since so much wheat was smuggled abroad out of Andalusia, the smuggling of grain should be made legal.

Corrupt tax officials could also be found to help the smugglers. There were allegations that customs officials in the bishopric of Calahorra, in Galicia, and in Asturias co-operated with merchants in a scheme to lower /

lower the customs duties. Alcabala officials in the Seville area were accused of actively helping smugglers. Even military and naval officials, including the admiral and his lieutenant, were alleged by the Crown to have lined their own pockets by protecting exporters from the tax officials.¹

Two other points about the internal structure of trade need to be examined. The first concerns the pattern of communications and the second concerns credit, finance, and the fairs of the kingdom.

Internal trade, it has been suggested, followed a simple communications network. Goods moved along the same routes that the sheep of the Mesta used. Moreover the carrying trade was also a seasonal matter. The carters spent the winter in the region of Toledo. In the spring the carts set out for the north and south covering some forty kilometres per day. To the north, they carried wool. At Vitoria iron was added to the wool and both commodities were taken thereafter to the ports on the north coast. In the south, the carts stopped at Almadén and loaded up with quicksilver for Seville /

1 For a flagrant example of complete disregard of the laws see Heers, Génes, pp.70-1. Evidence for examples cited in A.M.J., caja 1, no.36 de orden 338; A.M.C., section 5, patrimonio municipal, derechos sobre el puerto de Guijo, i; A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.29 and no.102, fos.1R-10V; ibid, leg.6, no.88; Escorial, x.11.14., fos.68R-69R; Gonzalez, Col.Cedulas, i.1-28. See also Cortes, ii. 10-11, 24-5 (14,42,43,1351), 280 (8,1377); ibid, iii. 149 (41,1432), 411 (17,1422), 684-5 (10,1455).

Seville. On their return journeys, from the north and south, the carters loaded up with salt for distribution inland.¹

This pattern is too simple. Even for the specific merchandise mentioned qualifications have to be introduced. Wool, for example, had to be collected from such diverse points as Segovia, Vitoria, Logroño, Valladolid, and Medina de Rioseco. Again the pattern suggests that there was one particular time for the departure of the fleets from the northern ports and yet documents speak of two such periods - one in March and one in October.²

The obvious point, however, is that there were far more goods involved in transportation than those mentioned. Imports such as cloth were distributed inland. Exports, such as wine sent out from the northern ports, had to be brought from the hinterland. Even goods which were neither exported or imported were subject to internal circulation over large areas. Seville, for example, distributed fish and sardines to Alcalá la Real, Antequera, Jaén and Guadalupe. Fish from Galicia could be brought in Seville for a town as far away as Úbeda.³

Markets /

1 María del Carmen Carle, 'Mercaderes en Castilla (1252-1512)', C.H.E., xxi-xxii (1954), 221; Vicens, Manual, pp.240-1. As so often happens, the situation described applied in the sixteenth century and has been assumed as valid for the fifteenth century.

2 R.S.Smith, The Spanish Guild Merchant (Durham, 1940), chap.v; González, Col.Cédulas, I. 1-28.

3 A.M.S., caja 1447-8, doc. dated 20 June 1449; ibid, caja 1468-70, condiciones for the saca of pescado fresco e saiado e sardina, 1470-1.

Markets and fairs served as focal points for trade.¹ The earliest reference to markets occurs in a document of Ordoño I of 857. From the tenth century onwards the number of markets increased rapidly. Sometimes held at the town gates, sometimes in a town square, these markets were usually restricted to one day in the week - for example, Mondays in Riaza, Wednesdays in León, Fridays in Avila. A whole network of these markets covered the country and facilitated trade at the local or regional level.

However, historians have been interested less in markets than in fairs. These fairs were usually held annually and facilitated trade on at least an inter-regional level. Appearing in the thirteenth century, there were some twenty five fairs by the end of the fifteenth century. Attention has, however, centred principally on the most famous of these fairs - the fair at Medina del Campo.

The importance of the Medina del Campo fair, as the centre round which the whole Castilian economy evolved, has been regularly asserted. Undoubtedly fairs such as Medina del Campo and Villalón facilitated inter-regional and international trade. Regulations relating to the fairs provide evidence for the presence of merchants from /

¹ For what follows generally see L.García de Valdeavellano, 'El mercado. Apuntes para su estudio en León y Castilla durante la edad media', *A.H.D.E.*, viii (1931), 201-405; Vicens, *Manual*, pp.252-4; Carlé, *ubi supra*, pp.146-64; Espejo and Paz, *op.cit.*, chaps.1-vi.

from various towns in Castile and from Valencia, Portugal, Catalonia, Flanders, Genoa and even Ireland. The merchandise bought and sold included everything from silk to livestock.

Yet the argument for the importance of the Medina del Campo fair is based primarily on the role of credit in the settlement of inter-regional and international obligations. The fair, in other words, provided for a systematic clearance of inter-regional transactions of all kinds. In Castile there was a particular need for such a credit and clearance structure. The central royal financial administration followed the itinerant court. The sheep were transhumant and wool merchants dispersed over a wide area. Consequently a whole range of financial transactions - the farming of royal revenues for example - carried clauses requiring payment to be made at the fairs of Medina del Campo.

In many ways the basic essentials of this picture are probably correct. Royal tax farmers, for example, did make payments at the Medina fairs.¹ Yet it should be emphasised that no adequate fifteenth century evidence has been produced to substantiate the importance of private /

¹ A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fos.374R-375V stipulates such payments for fairs during the period 1458-60; *ibid*, Exp.Hac., leg.1, no.164 for the fairs of 1466; *ibid* leg.1, no.106 and leg.2, no.27 for the fairs of 1463, although in one case the repayment of a loan is involved.

private credit operations.¹

There is also, surely, a case for arguing that in the fifteenth century other economic centres were far more important for trade than Medina del Campo. The importance of towns like Seville, Cadiz, Burgos, and Bilbao hardly needs to be stressed. These were towns which were important centres for marketing and distribution throughout the year. A high degree of economic activity in these towns was a permanent feature of society.² Medina del Campo and Villalón, on the other hand, only became important during the fairs. When these fairs were not being held there was nothing to distinguish these towns from the other small towns of the Castilian meseta.³

Bills of exchange, which remain a largely unstudied body of evidence,⁴ may well provide a method of assessing the respective importance of these centres. Certainly payments /

1 Espejo and Paz, op.cit., chap.iii argue that private transactions were more important than royal financial operations until the reign of Charles V. Presumably, since no evidence is put forward, this view is arrived at by allowing for the increase in royal operations after the arrival of silver. Carle, ubi supra., p.164 admits that the formula a pagar en la feria de Medina del Campo was not frequent.

2 See below pp.396-417

3 R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, passim, reveal a small town whose activities cannot even be compared to those of a town like Jerez - far less Seville, Burgos, or Bilbao.

4 As far as medieval Castile is concerned the only work which seems to touch on the problem is E. Benito Ruano, La banca Toscana y la Orden de Santiago en el siglo XIII (Valladolid, 1961).

payments - especially those of the royal finances - were stipulated for Medina del Campo. But it is also clear that bills of exchange were operating between, and involved, such towns as Valladolid, Burgos, Toledo, Seville, Córdoba, and foreign centres.¹ Merchants and their companies had factors and agents outside their own regions and transactions such as these indicate an exchange and credit structure which was not based on Medina but on the main economic centres of the kingdom. Moreover, unlike their successors in the sixteenth century, the merchants and merchant bankers of the fifteenth century did not become involved in the royal finances. Consequently they were not tied to the royal financial settlements at the Medina fairs in the same way as the Jewish and converso financiers were.² Thus, without denying the importance of the fairs, it seems probable that /

1 For example the bills of exchange both issued on the same day, 27 Nov. 1475, by Mosteo de Camila on Gregorio Pynolo and company in Toledo and the Medici bank in Rome: recorded by the notary in A.P.S., IV. Pedro Alvarez, fo. 244. It should be noted, however, that bills of exchange in these notarial records date from the 1470s and that Cortes, iii. 340-1 (35, 1438) petitions that Castilian merchants should operate exchanges between Castilian towns and such foreign centres as Genoa, Venice, Florence, Zaragoza, Barcelona, and Valencia.

2 There were, of course, exceptions. For example A.G.S., Exp. Hac., leg. 2 no. 96 records bills of exchange in 1457, involving members of the famous tax-farming Bienveniste clan and Genoese merchants of Seville, in which the Medina fairs and Seville are stipulated as places of payment. But, generally, the world of the royal finances (Jews and conversos) and the world of the important Burgos and Genoese merchants remained separate: see below pp. 445-6.

that, throughout most of the fifteenth century, mercantile transfer and credit operations continued to be based on the towns already mentioned.

4. Imports and Exports¹

Wool was Castile's most valuable export. As early as the twelfth century Castilian wool was imported into England. But it was only in the second half of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century that the volume of wool exports became really important. Furthermore Flanders and France - not England - were the principal customers. From the northern ports, such as Bilbao, Santander, and Portugalete, the wool was shipped out to Rouen, La Rochelle, Nantes, Dieppe, Harfleur and Bruges. These were the principal centres to which wool was exported. Doubtless much of this wool was then redistributed into the hinterland. In 1458, for example, Castilian wool worth 33,800 gold écus reached Paris. Yet the trade in wool was not restricted to the northern ports. Wool was also exported from Cartagena, Seville, and in the Crown of Aragon, Valencia. From Cartagena wool was exported to Mallorca, Barcelona, Savona, Genoa and Venice /

¹ See generally Vicens, Manual, chap. 21 and C. Verlinden, ubi supra, pp. 44-59. Documents from A.G.S., Est., leg 1 cited in this section, although undated, are clearly early fifteenth century and specific internal evidence - a report on Tamerlane's disruption of trade and the imprisonment of an important official of Seville - suggests a date in the period 1402-9.

Venice. The export of Castilian cloth, on the other hand, was restricted to Portugal and was not important.¹

Castile exported both cochineal and orchil.

Cochineal - kermes, grana - was exported from Seville which not only served as the distribution centre for Andalusia but also for cochineal from the Canary islands and the Barbary coast. Orchil was imported from the Canary islands and then re-exported from Seville and Cadiz to Flanders, Normandy and Italy. Castile was not the only supplier of cochineal but, from the 1450s, Castilian grana began to capture the greatest share of the European market.²

Castilian wine began to be exported regularly to northern markets from the fourteenth century. Most of this wine came from the Jerez region although some wine was also exported from the northern ports. A wine for which there was considerable demand was the vino romanía of Jerez, Rota, and Puerto de Santa María. For England there is evidence that the wine was sent to Southampton, London /

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- 1 H. Touchard, Le commerce maritime Breton (Paris, 1967), pp.217-8; E. Trocmé and M. Delafosse, Le commerce rochelais (Paris, 1953), p.89; J. Heers, Gênes, pp. 462-3, 491; F. Melis, Aspetti della vita economica medievale (Siena, 1962), pp.272-9; M. Mollat, Le commerce normand (Paris, 1952), p.113; C. Verlinden, 'A propos de la politique économique des Ducs de Bourgogne', Hisp., x (1950), 695; R.S. Smith, op.cit., chap.v.; A.G.S., Est., leg 1, nos.58, 60, 63, 64 contain data on wool exports from Cartagena.
- 2 Heers, Gênes, pp.489-90, 494; A.A. Ruddock, Italian merchants and shipping in Southampton (Southampton, 1951) p.77.

London, Bristol, and Plymouth. Rouen and Honfleur imported wines from Jerez. In the 1450s Spanish wine, almost certainly Castilian, even reached Paris. But the biggest market was in Flanders where, from October 1451, the town council of Bruges agreed to exempt Spanish wine merchants from extraordinary taxes on imports.¹ The southern ports of Castile exported fruit along with the cargoes of wine. Raisins, figs, lemons, oranges, dates, honey, and almonds, were sent to Brittany, Normandy, Flanders and England.²

Seville and Cádiz were the centres for the redistribution, both inland and abroad, of sugar brought from Madeira and the Canary islands. This trade in sugar did not really begin to function until the second half of the fifteenth century. Basically the change came with the transformation of production from grain to sugar in the islands. From the 1460s the cultivation of sugar made great strides. In 1468 the first known cargo of sugar from /

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- 1 Heers, Gênes, p.488; Mollat, op.cit., pp.113, 230,239; L.Gilliodts-Van-Severen, Cartulaire de l'ancien consulat d'Espagne (Bruges, 1901), 1.62-4, 97-102 (docs. of 1454, 1455, 1467); L.Suárez Fernández, Navegación y comercio (Madrid, 1959), p.119 (Henceforth cited as Suárez, Navegación); García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.237; A.A. Ruddock, op.cit., pp.77,80; Sancho, Documentos, pp.5-9.
- 2 Sancho, Documentos, pp.11-13; Bataillon, ubi supra, pp.228-45; F.Melis, op.cit., p.276; García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.237; E.M.Carus Wilson, 'The Overseas Trade of Bristol', Studies in English Trade, ed. E.Power and M.M.Postan (London, 1933), pp.214-5. It should be noted, however, that of all the documents on this commodity in R.Doehard and C.Kerremans, Les relations commerciales, (Brussels-Rome, 1952), the majority deal with fruit exported from Granada.

from Madeira was sent off to Flanders. Thereafter - with the Andalusian ports as entrepôts - sugar was sent to England, Italy, Flanders, Normandy and the Levant.¹

Heers has underlined the importance of the grain trade in the fifteenth century. Given the difficulties of land transport, ships ranged far and wide and carried enormous quantities of grain. Naturally this trade was subject to considerable fluctuations. What was the place of the kingdom of Castile in this trade?

Grain was exported. Ships, according to Heers, carried grain from Seville, Sanlúcar, and Cádiz to Genoa. In 1456 five ships sailed for Genoa and four shiploads of grain were sent in 1457.² Complaints by procuradores to the cortes seem to confirm this picture. In the cortes of Ocaña, 1422, it was pointed out that, whereas Henry III had only licenced the export of some 100 cahices of grain, John II had given similar licences for 1,000 cahices in the previous three years alone. In the cortes of Valladolid, 1447, it was alleged that grain had been sent to the kingdom of Granada with the king's licence. Again, in 1455, the procuradores alleged that grain had been /

1 Heers, op.cit., 495-7; Mollat, op.cit., 246; H. Sancho de Sopranis, Los Genoveses en Cádiz (Jerez, 1939), pp.11-12. Links between Seville, Cádiz, and Madeira, ibid and A.P.S., IV. Pedro Alvarez, fo.289v. Sugar was also distributed inland: A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg.1422, for example, refers to sugar arriving at Seville for the monastery of Guadalupe.

2 Heers, Genes, p.344.

been exported to Aragon, Granada and Portugal.¹ Yet this evidence does not substantiate a regular export trade. The export of grain to Genoa was certainly not a routine matter. The evidence, as Heers himself points out, is constituted by only ten documents and refers only to the years 1456-58. This was clearly a rare - perhaps unique - situation.

For the evidence points the other way. The north of Castile had to rely on imported grain. Probably most of this came from Brittany.² But wheat also arrived at the northern ports from Sluys, Rouen, Dieppe, and La Rochelle.³ The evidence for the south of Castile is more detailed. Grain was imported from places as far apart as Sicily, England, Flanders, and Brittany. But the main area from which grain was imported was north Africa.⁴

Again it must be stressed that this trade fluctuated enormously. It is not, however, misleading to contrast some figures with the nine shiploads of grain which Heers shows were sent to Genoa in 1456-57. In 1413 Genoese merchants /

1 Cortes, iii. 38-9 (5,1422), 545-6 (40,1447), 684-5 (10, 1455).

2 The basic element of Breton trade to Castile was grain: Touchard, op.cit., pp.210-12.

3 Heers, Gênes, p.345; Mollat, op.cit., pp.227-8, 232; Trocmé and Delafosse, op.cit., p.87.

4 See following note and A.M.E., caja 1447-8, doc. 8 Nov. 1448 for imports to Sanlúcar, Puerto, and Cádiz; Garcí Sánchez, pp.47, 60; Sancho de Sopranis, 'Los conversos y la inquisición', A.I.A., iv (1944), 595-610.

merchants brought 1,075¹ cahices (approximately 2,580 tons) of wheat to Seville. In 1469 some 6,720 tons of grain were imported from the Barbary coast. In 1473 the town council of Seville arranged for foreign merchants to import grain. The English merchants agreed to bring some 300 cahices, the Florentines 250, the Venetians 100 and the Genoese 1,104 cahices - a total of some 4,212 tons of grain. These figures also, of course, are exceptional. But the fact is that Seville was often in the position of having to import grain and rarely in a position to export it.¹

Another lucrative export was olive oil. From Seville and Cádiz it was sent to places as far apart as Chios, Flanders and England.² As usual most of this trade was in the hands of foreign merchants who even managed to store their oil inside the customs house in Seville.³ But, significantly enough, the profits must have been large enough to attract the Crown, for in 1429 the Crown arranged for the export of olive oil on its own account to Flanders.⁴

Castilian exports of salt could not hope to compete with /

1 A.M.S., caja 1412-13, no.189; ibid, caja 1468-70, Del pan de berueria; ibid, caja 1473-4, Relacion del pan de fuera parte. The figures only denote imports arranged by the town council and are not, therefore, totals.

2 Gilliodts Van Severen, op.cit., pp.61, 62-4, 87; Heers, Gènes, pp.361 488; Carus Wilson, ubi supra, p.215.

3 A.P.S., IV Pedro Alvarez, fo.250 (1 Dec.1475).

4 A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.12.

with salt from the Bay of Bourgneuf and Setubal. Nevertheless there is evidence that salt was exported to Bristol. In the Mediterranean, moreover, Castilian salt was not faced with such competition as in the Atlantic ports. Cadiz at one stage supplied salt to the kingdom of Granada and Genoa imported a considerable quantity of salt from La Mata. In 1450, for example, some 1,400 tons of salt were imported by the Genoese from La Mata.¹

Tunny fish were exported from the ports of the Cadiz and Seville area to England and Italy. Southampton had regular imports of barrels of tunny, Bristol occasionally imported them also, and Genoa and Venice seem to have imported considerable quantities.²

There is clear evidence that the export trade in soap was lucrative and yet the details remain somewhat obscure. It is known that Castilian soap was imported into Bristol and Southampton. The Port Books of Southampton reveal that cargoes of soap, especially black soap, were regularly imported.³ Furthermore, one historian /

1 Heers, Genes, pp.352-5; Carus Wilson, ubi supra, p.215.

2 Heers, Genes, pp.358, 488-9; A.P.S., IV Pedro Alvares, fos.247, 411.

3 If all the soap came from Castile then we are faced with a flourishing industry. Rarely, however, do the Port Books indicate the origins of soap, although the author of the Libelle of Englyshe Polyce identifies it as Castilian. But see H.S. Cobb, The Local Port Book of Southampton, 1439-40 (Southampton, 1961), p.124; Carus Wilson, ubi supra, p.215; J.W. Sherborne, The Port of Bristol in the Middle Ages (Bristol, 1965), p.26.

historian has argued a case against the prosperity of Southampton in the fifteenth century precisely because the trade in really valuable commodities, such as soap and sweet wine, was in the hands of foreign merchants.¹ And yet it is difficult to establish the connection between the 'valuable commodity' in England and the export of it from Castile. In effect there is only fragmentary evidence. In 1424 John II granted a privilege which exempted a good deal of soap from the usual export duties.² Several documents make vague references to the export trade in soap.³ The only substantial link is a document printed by Doehaerd and Kerremans which relates to the insurance of a cargo of soap being sent to Southampton from Seville.⁴

Both the northern and southern parts of Castile exported leather. England probably received leather via Bayonne and from Seville. Leather imported into Harfleur found its way to Rouen and Paris. Pisa received leather from Seville and there is evidence that some leather was sent from Cartagena to Genoa and Venice.⁵

Castilian iron from the Basque provinces seems to have /

1 O. Coleman, 'Trade and prosperity in the fifteenth century: some aspects of the trade of Southampton', Econ.H.R., xvi (1963), 9-22.

2 A.D.M., Alc.Duc., leg.55, doc.18.

3 Ibid., docs.24,25.

4 Doehaerd and Kerremans, op.cit., pp.492-3 (24 Oct.1430).

5 A.G.S., Est., leg.1, no.64 for leather to Genoa and Venice; Carus Wilson, ubi supra, pp.207,215; Heers, Gênes, p.444; Mollat, op.cit., p.17.

have enjoyed a quasi monopoly on the western European markets. The most important market was England. It seems more than probable that all Basque ships arriving at English ports during this period carried a cargo of iron or of iron manufactures such as anchors, brigandines, and crossbows.¹ But France, too, imported large quantities of iron. Iron was a regular cargo of ships going to Brittany.² Dieppe and Rouen also appear to have imported Castilian iron regularly. As early as 1408-9, for example, iron manufactures were sent to Dieppe and between 1476-83 no ship arriving at Dieppe from Spain failed to contain iron in its cargo. In the Low Countries at least Bruges, Middelburg and Sluys imported iron from Castile.⁴

The mercury produced at Almaden was exported to Valencia, Bruges, Genoa, Marseille, Florence, Chios and Syria. Mercury figures in the Libelle of Englyshe Polyce as an import from Spain, and some of it, perhaps, also found its way to the central European silver mines.⁵

All /

1 See, especially, Garcia de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.237-8 and M.K. James, 'A London merchant of the fourteenth century', Econ.H.R., viii (1955-6), 364-76. See also L.Gilliodts Van Severen, op.cit., pp.32-3; C.Verlinden, 'A propos de la politique economique ...', Hisp., x (1950), 691; Doehaerd and Kerremans, op.cit., pp.210-12, no.204.

2 Touchard, op.cit., pp.69, 217.

3 Mollat, op.cit., pp.18, 227-8.

4 L. Gilliodts Van Severen, op.cit., i. 39-40, 42-3, 58-60, 62-4, 78, 81 (various documents from the 1450s).

5 A. Matilla Tascon, op.cit., i. 5-29; Heers, Genes, p.490; Ruddock, op.cit., p.77.

All the evidence points to cloth as the single most important commodity imported into Castile.¹ A wide variety of cloths from various countries was available. The greatest amount of cloth came from the Low Countries. Brabant cloth - from Malines, Brussels, Vilvorde and Louvain - did not appear in Castile until the fourteenth century. Moreover the Brabant cloth - with the exception of Malines - never acquired the importance enjoyed by Flemish cloth. This preponderance of Flemish cloth may be explained by the immunities and privileges which were enjoyed by the Castilian merchants in Flanders.² But whatever the reasons, the regular supply of cloth from Bruges and Courtrai cannot be doubted. In Seville officials regularly received Flemish cloth as part of their salaries and the cloth itself could be purchased easily in the alcaicería and calle de francos.³

Cloth imported from Rouen must have been of a quality inferior to the Flemish and Brabant cloth.⁴ Lopez de Ayala makes one of the merchants in the Rimado del /

1 For what follows see C. Verlinden, El comercio de paños flamencos y brabantones (Madrid, 1952); the same, 'Paños belgas en fuentes literarias', C.H.E., xxix-xxx (1959), 218-30; the same, 'Draps des Pays-Bas et du nord de la France', M.A., xliii (1937), 21-36; H. Laurent, La draperie des Pays Bas (Paris, 1935), pp. 181-3.

2 Suárez, Navagación, p.119.

3 Hence the graph of cloth prices in Appendix C.

4 The luxury paños franceses of the chronicles probably included cloths from the Low Countries: for example, Cron. Lucas de Iranzo, pp.99, 153, 170, 435.

del Palacio try and sell Rouen cloth as cloth from Bruges or Malines¹ and, in Seville, cloth from Rouen was not outside the reach of a baker's purse.² Liensos from Brittany were also imported into the southern ports.

Large quantities of cloth - most of it ungrained broadcloth - were imported from England. London and Bristol are the places mentioned by the documents and it seems likely, too, that cloth was sent from Southampton.³

The rare cloths and fabrics present a problem since it is difficult to determine exactly where they came from. Silk was certainly brought across the frontier from the kingdom of Granada. In February 1444, for example, two witnesses at an enquiry declared that they had made a contract with merchants to bring 1,000 libras of silk from Granada.⁴ There were silk exchanges in Toledo and Seville at least, and there is evidence which indicates that Venetian and Genoese merchants brought silk to Seville and Cartagena.⁵ Gold cloth (pañes de oro) and sendal were also brought to the southern ports - probably from the East.⁶

Slaves /

1 B.A.E., lvii. 440, stanza 468.

2 A.P.S. IV. Juan García: two sales of Rouen cloth, 26 Jan. 1447.

3 See the English cloth among those listed in the Cuaderno in González, Col.Cédulas, i. 1-28; A.P.S., IV. Pedro Alvarez, fo. 369 for an English merchant's sale of cloth worth 14,200 mrs; ibid., III, Francisco Sánchez, fo. 15, for a dispute between a Jew and a Genoese over Bristol cloth.

4 A.G.S., Exp.Hac., leg 1, no. 22.

5 A.M.S., caja 1407-8, no. 49; A.P.S., III. Francisco Sánchez, fos. 12-13.

6 A royal agent awaiting a Venetian ship with arabics paños de oro e seda in A.G.S., Est., leg 1, nos. 61 and 62; a similar situation, ibid., no. 153.

Slaves were imported into southern Castile from Granada, the Black Sea, the Canary islands, and Africa.¹ The Italian colonies in the Black Sea provided Tartar slaves. Slaves from Granada were the victims of frontier incidents. Slaves from Africa were brought across the Sahara from the Sudan and, later, by the sea route opened up by the Portuguese. The first batch of 170 Guanche slaves from the Canaries was sold in Andalusia in 1385.²

By the late fifteenth century the trade in slaves seems to have attained considerable proportions. In 1475, for example, a special Negro judge was appointed for the numerous Negroes, both free and slaves, who lived in Seville.³ Yet it is probable that the growth in the slave trade was a late development. An early fifteenth century dispute, involving the tax farmers of the slave trade in Seville, makes it possible to assess the importance of each branch of the trade. The dispute arose as a result of a royal decision to prohibit the slave trade from the Canary islands. This decision was later /

1 For what follows see generally C. Verlinden, 'L' esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale (Bruges, 1955), i. 546-614.

2 After Lanzarotto Malocello's expedition in the 1330s the initiative passed to the Basques and Castilians. For this and more data on Guanche slaves, ibid., pp. 550-1 and Heers, Gênes, p.494.

3 Verlinden, op.cit., pp.566-7.

later annulled but, in the meantime, an adjustment had to be made to the tax farm in order to compensate for the losses resulting from the prohibition. The details of this adjustment are interesting. African slaves are not even mentioned and the references to the Tartars suggests that their numbers were of little importance. As for the Moorish slaves, fluctuations in the trade had to be taken into account. For, in the original assessment of the tax farm, Castile and Granada had been at peace 'with the result that Moors were rarely sold in this city as they are at present'. In the end the amount deducted from the tax farm was more than two thirds of the total - a fact that clearly underlines the predominance of the trade in Guanches.¹

The picture which emerges from the adjustment of the tax farm is not surprising when the general background to the slave trade is taken into account. The demand - a limited one - was for domestic and not 'plantation' slaves. Moreover the Granada sector of the trade was limited by the conditions on the frontier. The populations on both sides of the frontier frequently co-operated in order to prevent an escalation of the frontier incidents which enabled a trade in slaves to flourish. Hence there was an exchange of information and petitions about /

¹ These details in A.M.S., caja 1406-7, no.26.

about captives. Skilled negotiators from both sides - the alfaqueques - moved freely across the frontier to secure the freedom of captives.¹ It was only with the rise in the number of African slaves, after Portuguese expansion was well under way, that the slave trade showed signs of substantial growth.

The southern ports of Castile, especially Seville and Cádiz, were also at the centre of the complex flows of gold and silver distribution. In Europe generally there was an acute shortage of both gold and silver. But the patterns of scarcity varied. In 1435, for example, the bimetallic ratio in north Africa was 9:1, in Spain 10:1, and in northern Europe 11:1.² In general terms the variations induced a flow of silver to southern Spain and north Africa and an opposing flow of gold northwards. The most important source of gold was in the western Sudan and its hinterland,³ from whence gold arrived in Seville and Cádiz by several routes. A trans-Sahara network took the gold to Tripoli, Tunis, Oran and Honein. In these ports a good deal of gold was /

1 Compare, for example, the rather fragmentary data on slaves from Granada in Verlinden, op.cit., pp.555-7 with J. de Mata Carriazo, 'Relaciones fronterizas entre Jaén y Granada en el año 1479', R.A.B.M., lxi (1955), 23-51.

2 V. Magalhães-Godinho, op.cit., p.97.

3 M. Malowist, 'The social and economic stability of the western Sudan in the middle ages', P.P., no.33 (April, 1966), 8.

was collected by the Genoese and by the Moors of Granada. In both cases gold filtered through to Seville and Cádiz; from the Genoese because of an unfavourable balance of trade and from Granada because of the yearly tribute of 20,000 golden doblas which the rulers paid to the Castilian kings. Later, from the 1460s, a sea route took gold directly from ports in west Africa to Seville and Cádiz.¹

In a very real sense Seville and Cádiz were the centres of the distribution of gold. From here gold was taken by Florentine ships to Flanders and England. Figures for gold imports into Genoa for 1377 show that by far the largest supplies came from Seville and Cádiz. The reasons for the dominance of Seville and Cádiz seem to stem from the unfavourable balance of trade which the Genoese had with Castile. The Genoese had a favourable balance of trade with the north African ports. Hence the drain of gold across the Sahara to north Africa. But the Genoese in turn had to use some of this gold to prop up their unfavourable trade balance with Castile and with the East. They also used gold to obtain sackfuls of small Castilian silver coins which they sent from Seville, Cádiz, and Cartagena to Genoa. This silver helped to alleviate the chronic shortage of silver in Italy and the coins /

¹ Heers, Gênes, pp.66-73, 478-82. A.P.S., IV. Pedro Alvarez, fo.276v for data on a contract to bring gold from the mina de oro.

coins were easily adapted to the Genoese economy.¹

The evidence indicates, therefore, that Seville and Cadiz were, by 1460, among the chief gold and silver markets of the Mediterranean world. And yet there is one obvious difficulty about this argument. If there was a shortage of silver in Italy, there was also, surely, a shortage in Castile. If the Genoese obtained silver in Castile where did the silver in Castile come from?

A royal enquiry into the farm of the Castilian mints provides a clue to an answer. One of the points revealed by the enquiry was that, at one stage, Genoese merchants in Seville had sent information to Flanders in an attempt to rig the price of silver in Castile. Castile, therefore, imported silver from Flanders. Does this indicate that silver from the central mines reached Castile via Flanders?²

5. The Economic Conjunction

The discussion which follows deals with two fundamental problems. In the first place there is an attempt to /

1 Heers, Gênes, pp.66-73, 478-82.

2 The royal enquiry in A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.56. There is no proof that German silver reached Castile. Castilian mercury, however, may well have gone to the German mines: Heers, Gênes, p.490 and L'Occident aux xive et xve siècles (Paris, 1966), p.171. That the south Germans had penetrated to the Low Countries and made available supplies of silver is shown by H. Van der Wee, The growth of the Antwerp market (Louvain, 1963) ii. 124. Hence, perhaps, the cargoes of silver; A.G.S., Est., leg.1, nos.60 and 63, for example, show the Venetians unloading 1,000 marcos of silver in Cartagena.

to locate the short term crises of subsistence in fifteenth century Castile. The second problem concerns the nature of the general economic trend in the fifteenth century. In both cases statistics of an elementary nature - lacking in all previous discussions of these problems - are provided in order to substantiate the tentative conclusions which are put forward.

i) Crises of subsistence.

Crises of subsistence were frequent during the years 1400-74 and appear to have become harsher during the last twentyfive years of the period. (Table I).¹ Inevitably there was a relationship between climate, bad harvests, chronic shortages of grain, and plague.

Many of the crises naturally coincide with the fluctuations of wheat and barley prices in Seville. (Tables II and III).² But these prices cannot be used as evidence for the existence of a crises. The reason is that other factors, such as debasement of the coinage, might have caused a sharp rise. The prices, therefore, may confirm but do not themselves reveal the existence of a crisis. Another point to notice is that the crises were often limited in area. It may be that any one crisis /

1 See Appendix A, pp. 554-6, for this table. No references are cited in the following discussion since a list of all the evidence is given in this same Appendix.

2 See Appendix B, pp. 557-62.

crisis affected more areas than those which have been listed. Yet without further evidence it would be totally misleading to regard most of these as other than local crises. Prices, supply and demand differed from one region to another. Seville could arrange to import massive amounts of grain from north Africa; Salamanca and Segovia could not. Finally, it can be argued that the mechanism of crisis was fairly consistent. The crises may have affected different areas: the causes and results were usually the same. This is at least true for Andalusia. An examination of some examples confirms this point.

The evidence of the chronicles shows that there was a drought in the year 1413 which resulted in bad harvests and starvation throughout the kingdom. This type of evidence is notoriously untrustworthy. Yet in this case it can be substantiated by evidence for Seville which shows that the crisis of 1412-14 affected most of Andalusia. In fact the drought started in 1412. On the 9th December 1412 the town council of Seville met and

discussed the great shortage of grain due partly to the war against the Moors, to the bad harvests of the previous two years, and the inability to sow grain because of the lack of rain.

They had good cause to be worried. The prices of wheat and barley shot up. Between January 1412 and January 1413 the price of a fanega of barley rose from 15 mrs to

58 ms.. The price of one fanega of wheat rose from 16 ms. and 5 dineros in August 1412 to 80 ms. in April 1413. Faced with this situation the town councillors embarked on a whole series of measures to meet the crisis. All taxes on grain were removed in order to facilitate import, not only from abroad, but from places like Medellín and the Alcántara lands as well. Officials were constantly sent out to examine allegations that grain was being exported to other areas. That the crisis covered a greater area than Seville is shown by the activities of these officials. Some of them were seaborne and keeping a watch on the coasts. Others were in Jerez, Puerto de Santa María and Cádiz. Indeed in some of these areas the officials had a problem in persuading the authorities to allow grain for Seville to pass through. Two other problems remained - to arrange for the import of grain and to raise money for this importation. A commission of five councillors was set up to treat with foreign merchants and anybody else who might provide relief. In the event the Genoese brought 2,580 tons of wheat in 1413. Yet the whole operation must have been fairly costly, for the town council in the end not only borrowed money from individuals but also had to help itself to cruzada revenues kept in the cathedral.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that there were /

were epidemics during this period. Already at the beginning of the century there had been a serious enough outbreak to cause Henry III to change the laws regarding marriage. Now the pestilencia broke out again. By 1416 all the financial and military assessments for the Seville area had to be redrafted because of 'the changes occurring during the past years of starvation and death'.

Most of the crises were probably limited to particular regions. Two others, however, probably affected most of the kingdom - the crisis of 1434-38, and the crisis of 1465-73. The winter of 1434-35 was little short of catastrophic. Valladolid, Medina del Campo, Madrid, and Seville were all affected. Grain became scarce, cattle and men died, ploughing and sowing were affected in many areas. The price of wheat in Seville rose from 13 mrs. in July 1433, to 43 mrs. in November 1435. Complaints about the situation were made in successive cortes. In the cortes of Madrid, 1435, the procuradores put forward a petition relating to the 'great shortage of wheat, barley and rye'. The following year, in the cortes of Toledo, complaints were made about pestilencias, depopulation and high prices. Plague in fact, was to be found in at least Roa, Valladolid and Medina del Campo in 1437. In the cortes of 1438 the procuradores once more brought up the subject. They declared that the whole kingdom was suffering from a grave /

grave shortage of grain because of bad harvests, due to climatic factors, and because of the exportation of grain. They pointed out that there had been a sharp price rise and that the areas which were suffering most were Andalusia, and the areas on the frontiers with Aragon, Navarre and Portugal.

The crisis of 1465-73, coinciding with the anarchy towards the end of Henry IV's reign, was particularly severe in Andalusia, and affected the rest of Castile as well. The evidence provided by the Seville archives reveals the familiar pattern. The same mechanism of crisis as in 1400-2, 1412-14, 1423-6 and 1447-9. There were, of course, slight differences from the crisis of 1412-14 outlined above. Warfare made this crisis worse. This time the town council contracted for wheat imports with English, Florentine and Venetian as well as Genoese merchants. Wheat was imported from Brittany in 1467. But apart from these and other minor differences the pattern was the same. There were prolonged periods of drought. Attempts were made to prevent the export of grain. Plague, described as gran pestilencia, afflicted the town in 1467.

There is evidence that the crisis was widespread. Drought and bad harvests caused a grain crisis in Jaén and in Jerez. In Jaén the price of a fanega of barley had /

had risen to 150 mrs by 1468. In Jerez the price of imported wheat by 1473 may have been as high as 1,200 mrs per fanega. All foodstuffs were, in fact, very scarce. There was no beef or pork and fruit and vegetables were in short supply. The evidence for Castile proper also indicates crisis. Prices quoted show that a fanega of wheat cost between 130-160 mrs. The inevitable pestilencia broke out in several places. When don Juan Ponce de León captured Cádiz in 1466 he found it deserted because of plague. Plague affected Jaen intermittently during the whole period 1458-1469. In Burgos the plague lasted the summer of 1466. Indeed the whole political situation changed when the pretender, Alfonso XII, left Arévalo because of the plague and died while making for Avila.

ii) Economic expansion?

Historians are unanimous that Castile in the fifteenth century enjoyed an economic boom. In a general context the point is significant. The depression which affected Europe from the early fourteenth century was not prolonged in Castile throughout the fifteenth century. The same is true for Genoa and Portugal. It would seem, in fact, that economic revival affected those places which led the way in the exploration and expansion which was to have /

have such momentous effects in the sixteenth century. The picture is confirmed by Vilar's analysis of the Catalan depression of the fifteenth century. There was not an overall expansion of the Mediterranean world but an economic expansion of certain specific areas.¹

As far as Castile is concerned two problems arise out of such an interpretation. In the first place can generalizations be made for such a vast area? Secondly, what is the evidence? Generally speaking historians do not argue that the economic trend in Barcelona would also affect the whole of the kingdom of Aragon. Nor do they argue that the economic trend in Italy can be assumed from the evidence for Genoa. The same surely holds true for the kingdom of Castile. The evidence put forward for Castile's expansion, moreover, is often contradictory and often extremely dubious. A quick review of the evidence will help to pinpoint the problems. Factors which may have served to produce a favourable conjuncture are demographic growth, a price-wage gap of the Hamilton type based on price or profit inflation, royal economic policy, expanding and changing markets.

Demographic statistics for this period are almost totally lacking. Figures from the Quintanilla census of /

1 For the general trend in Europe as a whole see D. Hay, Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (London, 1966), pp.387-8. For the specific areas mentioned, Vicens, Manual, chaps.14-22; Heers, Gênes, pp.501-7, Vilar, ubi supra, pp.1-62; Verlinden, Précédents Médiévaux de la colonie en Amérique (Mexico, 1954), passim; V. Magalhães-Godinho, op.cit., pp.30-9.

of 1482 suggest a figure of some six to eight million inhabitants for the kingdom of Castile. Perhaps this represented a significant increase in the size of the population. No deductions can be made from this evidence. Far more significant was the distribution of the population within the kingdom. It seems probable that the south of Castile benefited from a considerable increase in population.

Generally speaking there seems to have been an exodus of the population from the countryside into the towns in Andalusia. Certainly the towns of Andalusia were far larger in population than the towns of the centre and north. That the growth of the Andalusian towns was proportionately much greater than the growth of the other towns of the kingdom is shown by the following figures.¹ The figures refer to town population at the end of the century.

<u>South</u>	Seville	75,000
	Córdoba	35,000
	Jerez	35,000
	Murcia	25,000
	Baeza	20,000
	Ubeda /	

¹ For Bilbao, García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.72. All other figures from Vicens, Manual, pp.223-4. I use the term 'growth' because it seems probable that this was the case even for the towns of the centre and north. See, for example, the case of Valladolid in Bennisar, op.cit., p.26.

	Ubeda	20,000
	Andujar	15,000
	Carmona	15,000
<u>Centre and North</u>	Toledo	20-25,000
	Valladolid	"
	Medina del Campo	"
	Salamanca	"
	Burgos	10,000 and under
	Segovia	"
	Cuenca	"
	Bilbao	5,700

The figures reveal the pre-eminent position that Seville held in the kingdom. It is also surprising to find that towns like Baeza and Ubeda were almost twice the size of Burgos and Segovia. For the moment it is enough to note the greater weight of population in the south and the size of the southern towns.

Ever since Hamilton it seems to have been impossible to discuss Spanish economic history without reference to price history. As far as fifteenth century Castile is concerned, no proper price series exist. Despite this, however, historians have not been deterred from speculation. Ordinances on prices and wages have been solemnly examined and artificial wages have been divided into artificial /

artificial prices at great length in order to establish hypothetical conclusions.¹ The secular trend for the whole of fifteenth century Spain has been deduced from prices in Valencia, unsubstantiated generalizations about Seville prices, and monetary evidence derived solely from the reign of the Catholic sovereigns.²

In fact all generalizations about the secular trend of prices remain pure speculation and, in order to avoid adding to the confusion, it is vital to indicate the limitations of the price series which are presented in this study.³ These are the only price series which exist for fifteenth century Castile. Almost all the prices are from Seville and this immediately poses the problem of whether any generalizations, based on this evidence, should apply to the south west of the kingdom only. The grain prices (Tables II and III) do not form a proper series and cannot therefore be presented on a graph.⁴ /

1 An involved discussion of little value on thirteenth and fourteenth century ordinances in Vicens, Historia, ii. 305-11.

2 See Braudel in Cambridge Economic History of Europe, iv. 401-2. Braudel is very careful to underline the speculative nature of his conclusions. However there seems little point in using Valencian prices for the kingdom of Castile since the two areas were not politically - or even economically - united. Sayous' evidence, cited by Braudel, is almost certainly confined to the reign of the Catholic sovereigns and is clearly contradicted by the prices in this study. Finally the apparent stability of the money of account was a feature of the last two decades of the century only: previously the exact opposite was the case.

3 See Tables II and III in Appendix B, pp. 557-62; the graph in Appendix C, p. 563; Table IV in Appendix D, p. 564.

4 Presumably, because of seasonal variations, the minimum condition for such a graph would be prices dating from the same month in each year.

All prices are given in money of account and not in terms of silver. As a result the prices are clearly more helpful in establishing the effects of price movements on society than in establishing the secular trend of the economy.¹ In short the evidence is limited in scope and will not go far in helping to solve the relevant problems.

The prices clearly provide evidence of an economic crisis. On the whole the price level remains stable till about 1435. Thereafter prices begin to rise in a movement which becomes especially pronounced for the period 1460-79. This movement is confirmed by both the prices of cloth and grain.

It must be remembered, however, that these prices constitute a 'nominal' price movement. The maravedi was the money of account and not a coin as such. Technically, therefore, the maravedi was not subject to debasement in the way that coins were debased. But moneys of account were subject to devaluation and the maravedi was no exception. Debasement of the coinage entailed a devaluation of the maravedi since the raising of the face value of coins, in terms of the money of account, was followed by a devaluation of the maravedi in terms of /

¹ An interesting discussion on this problem in J.D. Gould, 'The Price Revolution Reconsidered', Econ.H.R., xvii (1964-5), 249-66.

of gold, silver, and foreign exchange.

The nominal movement of the grain and cloth prices is, in fact, so sharply upwards as to suggest that the maravedi was suffering from devaluation. In effect two currency factors have to be taken into account. From at least the reign of Henry II (1369-79) there was a persistent debasement of the coinage.¹ In the fifteenth century, however, debasement was particularly marked during Henry IV's reign (1454-74) and resulted in a state of monetary anarchy. Hence, throughout the fifteenth century, there was a 'normal' trend in the devaluation of the maravedi which assumed the proportions of a crisis in the reign of Henry IV. The clearest manifestations of this debasement and consequent devaluation are to be seen in the exchange rates of coinage in terms of maravedis. The raising of the face value of coins was very pronounced. In 1438, for example, the real de plata was worth $8\frac{1}{2}$ mrs but by 1468 it was worth 30 mrs. At the beginning of John II's reign (1406-54) the dobla de la banda was worth 90 mrs. It then rose to 111 mrs by 1438, 150 mrs by 1462, 200 mrs by 1465, and 365 mrs by 1487.²

The /

1 The late medieval Castilian coinage still awaits proper examination. The best general discussions are O. Gil Farres, Historia de la moneda española (Madrid, 1959) pp.214 ff. and Vicens, Historia, II. 94-106 and 430-4.

2 For more examples see Gil Farres, op.cit., pp.214 ff. and Vicens, Historia, II. 430-4.

The fact that the prices are expressed in terms of maravedis, therefore, makes it impossible to separate the effects of devaluation from the other causes of price inflation. It would be useful to convert from maravedis into silver prices but the lack of data makes this impossible at present.¹ It is clear, however, that such a conversion would reduce the violence of the nominal inflation and the extent of this reduction is obviously crucial to establishing the secular trend. Since this cannot be done the stage of speculation has once again been reached. Two general possibilities present themselves.

It is possible that devaluations of the maravedi were sufficiently serious to cancel out the rise in prices when expressed in terms of silver. In such a case the secular trend would show stability or even stagnation. There is fragmentary evidence to support this hypothesis. Silver supplies may well have been overvalued and the devaluation of the maravedi could be regarded as a demand for silver. The price of silver worried /

¹ The mint prices of silver would, I suppose, be best for such a conversion. An alternative solution would be to convert the prices into a foreign - and stable - currency. I have tried this, as far as the evidence of exchange rates will allow, with the Aragonese gold florin. The result confirms the argument which follows - namely that other factors were causing inflation.

worried mint officials in the 1440s and some minting of silver coins was suspended in the next decade because of a scarcity in supply.¹

The second - and more attractive - possibility is that debasements did not account for all of the price rise. The nominal price inflation began round about 1435 but the debasement crisis was mainly concentrated in Henry IV's reign. Debasements, therefore, aggravated an existing inflationary trend. Such an inflation of prices could have been caused by an increase in the supplies of silver although this would appear to be unlikely. In any case to concentrate on the supply of silver is to subscribe implicitly to the quantity theory of money and ignore other relevant and vital evidence. In fact the prices of grain and the chronology of the crises of subsistence (Tables I - III)² clearly suggest that, after 1435, grain prices rose not just because of debasement but because of a crisis in the supply and demand situation in cereals. The grain crisis, moreover, became especially serious from 1460 onwards and this parallels the evidence of the prices. The seriousness of the crisis in this staple commodity must have influenced other prices and /

1 A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.56; Gil Farrés, op.cit., pp.216-9.

2 Appendices A and B, pp.554-62.

and in itself is a good indicator of the secular trend. The agrarian crisis of the second half of the century affected most of the kingdom. The grain and cloth prices, however, can only be used with precision for the Seville area and it may well be argued that important demographic factors were also stimulating inflation. It has already been seen that the southern towns were subject to demographic pressure and Seville, of course, was the largest town in the kingdom.

The evidence of prices can, therefore, support certain firm conclusions and some purely speculative suggestions. It is certain that there was a sharp rise in the nominal price movement. This rise in prices began before mid-century and lasted till at least 1480. The rise in prices affected the whole kingdom and not just the Seville area. We can be certain of this because the gravity of the debasements affected all prices (Table IV).¹ It is impossible to calculate how far other factors stimulated a price rise. Here there may well have been a distinction between the south and the centre of the kingdom. In terms of silver prices, there may have been a price rise in the south which did not affect the centre and north of the kingdom.

One historian, Viñas Mey, has stressed the part played /

¹ See Table IV, Appendix D, p. 564.

played by the Crown in the economic expansion.¹ According to this view the genesis of the mercantilist state was due to the fifteenth century kings. Larraz considers the whole period from 1500-1700 as 'the age of mercantilism'.² If the same policies were attempted in the fifteenth century, mercantilism must have existed then as well. In fact the opposite is true. The same policies do carry over from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. But they were not mercantilistic policies. Preoccupation over the alleged drain of gold to the papal court was a common attitude all over Europe. There is very little evidence to back up Viñas Mey's assertion that the Castilian kings were preoccupied with the balance of trade. Economic clauses in treaties with foreign powers do not constitute mercantilism. Protection for merchants was nothing exceptional. John IV of Brittany and Philip the Good of Burgundy did more to protect Castilian merchants in their dominions than did the kings of Castile. An alleged 'mercantilism', together with other such factors as the 'spirit' of the reconquista, do not really help /

1 C. Viñas Mey 'De la edad media a la moderna', Hisp., i (1940) no.1, 52-70, no.2, 64-101, no.3, 41-105; the same, 'El espíritu castellano de aventura y empresa', A.D.P., v (1952), 13-83.

2 J. Larraz, La época del mercantilismo en Castilla (3rd ed., Madrid, 1963).

help much in explaining the alleged expansion of Castile.¹

The vital factors in Castilian expansion were the changes in the trading pattern which placed the ports of Castile at the centre of European trade.² The first change occurred after the reconquest of Andalusia. By the end of the thirteenth century the sea route from the Mediterranean to the North Sea via the straits of Gibraltar was in regular use. This route replaced the fairs of Champagne as the main economic artery between the north and the south. Seville and Cádiz obviously benefited from the changeover to the North Sea merchant trade. A second change came after the period of 1406-10. It is argued that the activities of Tamerlane made some of the Italians switch their merchant activities from the East to the western Mediterranean. But the decisive change came just after 1450 with the Turkish advance in the East. The Venetians managed to hang on to their trade with the East. The Genoese, however, were forced to shift their attention from Phoea and Chios to the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Hence the 'colonisation' of Andalusia /

1 R. Carande, 'La economía y la expansión de España', B.R.A.H., cxxx (1952), 213-55; the same, 'Gobernantes y gobernados en la hacienda de Castilla', Arbor, xviii (1951), 187-209; H. Lapeyre and R. Carande, Relaciones comerciales en el Mediterraneo (Madrid, 1957), pp.66-7.

2 For what follows generally see Heers, Gênes, pp.482-5; J. Heers, 'Les Italiens et l'orient Méditerranéen' and Vicens Vives, Suárez Fernández, C. Carrère, 'La economía de los países de la corona de Aragón' both of which are in VI. Cong. Hist. Aragón (Madrid, 1957).

Andalusia and the kingdom of Granada. In these areas the Genoese found some of the cargoes - fruit, wine, grana - which they exchanged for the products of Flanders and England. In England at least, the Castilian produce was welcomed as England's hold on Gascony declined. The fragmentary statistics for the trade of Bristol suggest that, by the end of the century, Spain had become Bristol's principal supplier and consumer.¹ Southern Castile thus became a vital link of the Genoese sea empire. These factors, along with the activities in Ceuta, Madeira and the Canary islands were to serve as the springboard for the American expansion of the sixteenth century.

Yet these changes affected Andalusia only.² One cannot argue that because Seville and Cadiz prospered the whole kingdom prospered as well. In fact the northern ports also enjoyed a boom on a minor scale. It has already been pointed out that the export trade in iron and wool was channelled through the northern ports. The main factor for change here was the increased importance of Castile as a wool supplier. The cause for this is usually held to have been the prohibition against the importation of English cloth into Flanders. This policy /

¹ Sherborne, op.cit., pp.11, 25-6.

² They also affected Valencia and Granada. Indeed the contrast between Catalan decline and Valencian prosperity adds point to the arguments for Castile.

policy is held to have resulted in a switch of demand to Castilian wool. Another reason also appears convincing. The increased burden of taxation borne by the English wool interest during the Hundred Years War was passed on to the foreign customer. The latter, therefore, looked elsewhere for his supplies and ended up buying Castilian wool.¹

The increased exports of wool must also have benefited the centre of Castile. But on the whole there are good reasons for doubting that there was a general Castilian expansion which also affected the centre of the kingdom. At the beginning of this chapter it was argued that the economically unifying feature was the sea and not the land. In fact, of all the Castilian exports only one - wool - was supplied from the centre of the kingdom. All the other exports were produced by the northern and southern peripheries. The changes in trade and markets affected Andalusia above all. It has been seen that there was an extension of trade in the northern and southern ports. There is no evidence, on the other hand, that trade increased across the frontiers with Portugal and the Crown of Aragon.

The procuradores of the cortes described the situation well. According to them the whole problem of grain shortage /

¹ See M.M. Postan, 'The Costs of the Hundred Years' War', P.P. no.27 (April, 1964), 40-1.

shortage in Andalusia and Seville was due to the lack of balance between economic activities.

It is a land full of many and diverse people who live by rents and trade. A land where there are few farm workers. A land where many towns, frontier castles, and ships are dependent on the work of these few farm workers.¹

The crises of subsistence that affected Andalusia have been studied. Was this due to an increase in population as well as the weak state of agriculture? Another, and appealing, conclusion is possible. Grain production was not remunerative except in times of crisis. Sugar, wine, fruit, raisins, mercury, leather, and soap rendered greater profits. Grain production was sacrificed for more remunerative products. The Andalusian economy complemented the economies of Flanders, England and north Africa and, in this way, exports were profitable. Hence grain was imported from the Barbary coast and sugar production replaced grain in Madeira and the Canary islands. Perhaps the conclusion is exaggerated. Nevertheless the contrasts between the south and centre are too great to be ignored. It was a contrast between Seville and Toledo. Seville had three times the size of Toledo's population. Seville had trading links to England, Flanders, Genoa and the East. Toledo, despite its cloth production, exported nothing. On the one /

¹ Cortes, iii. 38-9 (5,1422).

one hand there was the central meseta where so many areas had small scale mixed farming economies. On the other hand there were the towns of the south where the Genoese, Florentine, English and Breton merchants had resident agents to organize the trade of Andalusia with western Europe.

CHAPTER III

THE NOBILITY

This chapter begins with a discussion of the nobility as one of the three estates of society. The main object, however, is to analyse the sources of wealth of the nobility. How far did the nobility benefit from the economic activities outlined in the previous chapter and did their income keep pace with rising prices? A consideration of these problems leads on to an examination of the royal finances as a source of income for the nobility.

1. The Estate: terminology, criteria, privileges

Social labels are always unsatisfactory and vague.¹ Fifteenth century Castilian terminology for the various groups of society was no exception. There seem to be three main difficulties about these terms. In the first place social labels continued to be used for long after the social reality to which they corresponded ceased to exist.² The second problem is caused by the vagueness of some of the terminology. A word such as caballero, for example, had several different meanings. Lastly, there /

1 For what follows see generally Vicens, Historia, ii. 114-5, 130-8.

2 Carle, 'Infanzones e hidalgos', C.H.E. xxxiii-xxxiv (1961), 73-4 gives an excellent example of the survival of terminology which originally referred to wergilds.

there is the problem of tracing the broad differences within society implied by these labels. Was the nobility the same as the estate? It is necessary to state what the labels meant in order to avoid confusion.

The terms ricos omes, ricos hombres, grandes, and personas de estado were used to describe the great nobility: great in lineage, wealth and political power. Of these, grandes, although only appearing in the later fifteenth century, came to be the most widely used term. The titles of conde, duque, marqués, and visconde were given to members within this group of grandes. In the fifteenth century the main criteria for bestowing these titles was political. The titles themselves did not indicate anything more than honour. Hardly ever did they hold any meaning in an administrative sense since public office had never been feudalised in Castile. Indeed all these titles were themselves a late innovation due to French influence. The one exception - conde - had originally meant a board companion of a great lord or king.¹

Two terms, segundones and infanzones, designated those in the vague area falling between the greater and lesser nobility or hidalgos. Often those involved were the younger sons of the great families of the ricos hombres /

¹ For the 'feudal' background generally see García de Valdeavellano, 'Las instituciones feudales en España', in the transl. of Ganshof, El feudalismo (Barcelona, 1963), pp.229-300. See, also, E. Lourie, 'A society organized for war', P.P. no.35 (Dec., 1966), 62-3.

hombres or grandes. The term infanzones had, by the fifteenth century, fallen out of use except in the north of Castile.

The term hidalgo or fijodalgo served to distinguish the lesser nobility from the ricos hombres or grandes. It was, however, often used to designate all the nobility down to the level of the hidalgo (the term hidalguía served the same purpose). The criteria involved here was strictly one of birth. Further distinctions obtained by using the terms escudero or caballero. Thus an hidalgo escudero was a noble squire and an hidalgo caballero was a knight.

The term caballero itself was the one which was probably used with the greatest variety of meanings. In the military sense it could be used to refer to a man who had been dubbed for his military prowess. Such a man might be a caballero noble or a caballero hidalgo. In the first case the man was a noble because he had been knighted, despite the fact that he had not been born into hidalguía. In the second case the man was already a noble since he was an hidalgo.

The term caballero, however, was also used to designate a non-noble knight. These non-noble knights (caballeros villanos, caballeros de cuantía or alarde) enjoyed some of the privileges of nobility if they fulfilled certain military criteria.

All or most of these labels had specific meanings. Many of them, however, were used in a very general sense in order to mark off social boundaries. Hence the word nobleza was used to designate grandes, hidalgos and caballeros nobles. So too was the word, caballero, although it was also used to include the non-noble knights in opposition to all those in society who did not enjoy exemption from taxation (pecheros). Indeed, for contemporaries, the great dividing line in society was provided by exemption from taxation. Castilians thought of fijosdalgos and caballeros on the one hand, and pecheros, or tax payers, on the other hand. Both the terms nobleza and caballería could be used to denote the military estate or order of society. The term estado itself, however, was less frequently used.

There were two general ways by which a man's noble status was juridically acknowledged. Noble status was accepted if the individual was a notorio fidalgo de solar conocido - that is, if it was an undisputed and well known fact. Alternatively an individual could have himself declared a nobleman by the law. There was a fixed procedure for obtaining such a judgment. The case was heard by a special judge (alcalde) at the king's court or in the chancillería. Evidence had to be submitted and a representative of the area where the individual lived had to be present, as also did the king's procurador fiscal.
The /

The resulting sentencia, or judgment, was then given and, if favourable to the individual, was accepted as proof of his nobility.¹

These generalities do not indicate, however, which specific qualities pertained to the nobility. Undoubtedly the most important single factor was lineage. The overriding factor which determined nobility was descent.

'Fidalguía', says the Siete Partidas, 'is nobility which comes to men by lineage'.² As early as the eleventh and twelfth centuries the nobleman was defined by his blood and genealogy and not by his occupational role.³ The result of this was the idea that the king could not confer this nobility because it was only conferred by ancient and noble lineage. It was a quality which belonged primarily to the grandes and to a lesser extent to the hidalgos. Thus the king could dub a knight but the hidalgo had to be born as such. The distinctions imposed by lineage were quite clearly understood by contemporaries. Indeed Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, in his pen portraits of the leading figures of his day, tended to describe men almost exclusively in terms of lineage.⁴ A consequence of this insistence /

1 O.R., Lib. iv, tit. ii, ley vi. This procedure was given definition towards the end of the fourteenth century, Cortes, ii, 293-4 (19,1379). For an example of such a case see below pp. 116-8.

2 S.P., Pt. ii, tit. xxi, leyes i, ii.

3 Vicens, Historia, ii, 132-3.

4 Thus Pedro de Frías, cardinal of Spain, is described as an 'ombre de baxo linage' while Alvar Pérez de Osorio's lineage is 'grande e antiguo': Generaciones, pp. 77, 111.

insistence on lineage was the detailed legislation which aimed at preventing a debasement of the noble order. Generally it seems that the husband's status determined the status of the wife and children. A noblewoman, for example, who married a pechero or commoner lost her status of hidalguía. On the death of her husband, however, she could recover her status by knocking on her husband's coffin three times with a halberd and saying, each time, 'Commoner, keep your status and give me back my nobility'. The children of a noble father and commoner mother (madre villana) were considered as noble. Yet if the father was a commoner and the mother originally noble the children were commoners.¹

Inevitably confusion arose in cases of lineage. In many cases an individual's hidalguía was disputed - he was not a notorio fijo de solar conocido. In these cases nobility could be proved by reversing the equation. A noble had certain privileges. Enjoyment of these privileges over a certain period of time proved nobility. On both points - privileges and time - the laws were fairly specific. Since all these cases inevitably concerned the lesser nobility the practical issue at stake concerned the noble privilege of exemption from taxation. Therefore, if the claimant's grandfather and father had lived in the same area and had enjoyed exemption from taxation because they /

¹ Fuero Viejo, Lib. i, tit. V, ley xvii; Carlé, loc.cit., p.73; S.F., Pt.ii, tit. xxi, ley iii; O.R., Lib. iv, tit. ii, ley vi.

they claimed hidalguía, then the claimant's right to hidalguía was recognised. This procedure was, in effect, a way of proving that a man was a notorio fijo dalgo de solar conocido.¹

A unique feature of society in the kingdom of Castile was the geographical criteria of nobility. Everyone born in Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, and to a certain extent Asturias was ipso facto a nobleman. Paradoxically a collective and democratic nobility existed in these areas. Obviously in such a case status lost much of its meaning. But the privileges of nobility, especially exemption from taxation, were strongly defended. Henry III, for example, asked the towns of Guipúzcoa in 1392 to contribute 12,000 francos for the Lancastrian debt.² On the 30th January 1393 the representatives of the towns of Guipúzcoa stated in their reply

that the town councils and places in the letter ... were not and are not obliged to pay the amounts stated ... since ... these councils and areas and their inhabitants ... were immune and lived from their foundations as fijosdalgos having a status of such a kind that never, at any time in the world up to the present day, have they, or their predecessors, ever had to pay and never have paid any msa. of any such servicio ...³

Lineage determined the nobility of the ricos hombres, grandes, and hidalgos. Castile, however, was no different from /

1 Q.R., Lib. iv, tit. ii, leyes vi, vii.

2 This debt was the legacy of John of Gaunt's claims to the Castilian throne: P.E. Russell, The English Intervention (Oxford, 1955), chap. xix.

3 A.G.S., D.de C., leg.6, no.189. See also the highly interesting study by Arroceña, 'La exención tributaria de Guipúzcoa', B.R.V.P., Separata (1954).

from other societies in its concept of the three estates of society.

Defensores are one of the three estates which God ordained should maintain this world. For inasmuch as those who pray to God for the people are called oradores: and inasmuch as those who work the land ... are called labradores: so too are those who protect everybody called defensores.¹

How did this criteria of military service and protection fit in with the concept of nobility? As a result of the absence of 'feudalism' in early medieval Castile and the continuing military necessities imposed by the reconquest, Castilian society presented several unique features. It is not proposed to deal with this general evolution from the early medieval period but merely to describe the situation as it existed in the fifteenth century.²

In practice the nobility only had to perform military service in return for a cash benefice. It is true that the idea of an intimate relationship between military service and nobility remained strong. Indeed the idea was far stronger than is generally supposed. The Prince of Asturias, in 1444, threatened that all the nobility who did not turn up to perform military service when summoned would be reduced to the status of commoners and would lose all /

1 S.P., Pt.ii, tit. xxi, preamble.

2 The best study on 'feudalism' in Castile is García de Valdeavellano, ubi supra, passim.

all their privileges.¹ Yet in practice the two concepts were no longer synonymous.

Feudal terms such as beneficio, honor, vasallo, vasallaje, and inmunidades had become current from the twelfth century onwards. These terms reflected French influences rather than Castilian realities. By the fifteenth century there was no link between land and military service. The benefice in Castile had never fused with vassalage to produce the fief. Moreover, from the civil wars of the fourteenth century onwards, the granting of land by the Crown took the form of seigneurial jurisdictions or estates and bore no relation whatsoever to the semi-feudal benefices which had existed earlier. Benefices, in this sense, did not exist in the fifteenth century and, in fact, Castilian society showed no trace of the semi-feudalism which had existed in the early and central middle ages. There were immunities but these were the immunities of the señorio. Vassals and vassalage remained if the benefice did not. But the idea of vassalage was a debased one. The king still retained vassals in the feudal sense in that they were linked to him by vassalage. But this vassalage was not linked to any benefice and a more generalised meaning of the word vasallo was prevalent. All the king's subjects were /

1 C.D.R.A.H., 9-13 (vi, 22 May 1444).

were called vasallos.¹ In this general sense all the king's subjects had to serve when called upon. In this general sense, also, the nobility were supposed to serve. But the concept was too generalised and hardly supports the idea of a société vassalatique.²

The link between the nobility and the military role of the estate of defensores was now one which was largely based on cash. The Castilian Crown in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries made specified yearly payments of cash in specified areas in return for specific military service.³ A payment of 1,500 ms per year, for example, entailed an obligation on the part of the recipient to provide a knight for military service. Military service was not, therefore, obligatory on the nobility. A nobleman might possess huge seigneurial jurisdictions and estates. He may not necessarily have been a vassal except in the generalised sense. Consequently there was no specific military criteria of nobility in such a case unless he received specified payments of money.⁴ These payments /

1 All the subjects in the sense of all those included in the three estates. Even in the early middle ages the word vasallo was not linked to homage but referred to the general relationship between the king and his subjects or a caudillo and his soldiers. See Pescador, 'La caballería popular', C.H.E., xxxiii-xxxiv (1961), 129.

2 See García de Valdeavellano, ubi supra, pp.247-61 and N.R., Lib. vi, tit. vi, ley ii.

3 For the origins of a standard system of military service based on a fixed money ratio see Carlé, loc.cit., pp. 85-6.

4 This is clearly the implication of John II's law of 1432 in N.R., Lib. vi, tit. vi, ley i.

payments of money were known as tierra or acostamiento. Tierra literally means land. In fact tierra involved annual payments by the Crown to the holder, and the total corresponded to the number of lances which the nobleman had to produce for military service. Strictly speaking tierra did not constitute a money fief since the money benefice was not linked to any form of specific homage or vassalage. This type of money benefice varied little in practice from acostamiento. The theoretical difference seems to have arisen from the idea that the retinue, paid by acostamiento, lived and travelled with their lord.

In some cases military criteria still played an extremely important part in determining status. In a frontier society the defensores were still needed and this gave rise to a non-noble class of knights who enjoyed the privileges of nobility without actually having noble status. There were two groups within this class: the caballeros villanos (commoner knights) and the caballeros de cuantía or alarde (assessed knights).¹

In both cases the factors leading to the enjoyment of noble privileges were roughly the same. A pechero - that is a tax payer or commoner - could enjoy some of the privileges of nobility provided that he maintained a horse /

¹ On these caballeros see generally Pescador, 'La caballería popular', C.H.E., xxxiii-xxxiv (1961), 101-238 and Martínez Ruiz 'La caballería villana en Castilla', Nordeste, no.3 (1961), 83-111.

horse and armour of stipulated value and provided that he performed military service along with the noble hidalgos who held tierra and acostamiento from the Crown. In short, if the commoner performed the same function in war as the noble knight he enjoyed the same privileges. Unlike his noble counterpart, however, he did not receive a benefice of cash in the shape of tierra or acostamiento.¹

The criteria was a purely military one, although wealth played an important part in enabling the military criteria to be applied. The pechero, or commoner, enjoyed the privileges as long as he fulfilled the obligations. Failure to fulfil the obligations meant loss of status and privilege.² Lineage and descent counted for nothing. A son could inherit his father's status only if he fulfilled the same obligations.³

The caballeros villanos appeared as early as the tenth and eleventh centuries. Land was not in short supply and the granting of benefices of land was not therefore particularly attractive. Indeed, it was precisely because these men had sufficient landed wealth and because there was a demand for knights that they could afford /

1 O.R., Lib. iv, tit.i, leyes iv,v,vi,ix. In 1432 and 1447 John II decided that the horse's value must be 3,000 mrs: Cortes, iii. 144 (34,1432) and 539-43 (36,1447).

2 A short period of grace was usually allowed: Pescador, 'La caballería popular', C.H.E., xxxv-xxxvi (1962), 87-8.

3 More details in ibid, pp.76-7.

afford the relevant horse and armour and thereby enjoy noble privileges.¹

The caballeros de cuantía or alarde were different in origin. There is evidence that they existed as far as back as the twelfth century. The great increase in their numbers, however, took place in the fourteenth century when the military needs of the Crown led to an increase in the enforcement of military obligations on commoners whose wealth rose above a certain limit. In the same way as noble vassals had to provide a fixed number of knights in relation to tierra and acostamiento received from the Crown, so did these commoners have to maintain a fixed number in relation to their wealth. These assessments of wealth varied from place to place.² The word quantía obviously referred to the relationship between military obligation and assessed wealth. The word alarde referred to the obligation of the caballero to review his horse and armour, twice a year, before the officials of the municipal jurisdiction in which he lived.³ These caballeros de cuantía owed their existence, primarily /

1 Pescador, 'La caballería popular', C.H.E. xxxiii-xxxiv (1961), 134, 150.

2 Ibid, pp.160-1, 202-8, 210, 213, 228 and in C.H.E., xxxv-xxxvi (1962), 67-76.

3 Q.R., Lib.iv, tit.iii, ley xxi. But there are signs that the alarde was becoming less frequent and that the caballeros villanos were also affected by it. Hence the distinctions between the two groups became blurred. See Cortes, iii. 542 (36,1447).

primarily, to the military needs of the frontier and it is, therefore, easy to understand that they were to be found almost exclusively in Andalusia and Murcia by the fifteenth century.¹

Both these groups of knights may be designated by the general title of caballería popular and, generally, it seems that they were an urban class. At an early stage of the reconquest the repopulation of the Duero valley created a large class of free landowners in a society where a strong nobility was lacking. In such a society the towns and the caballería popular therefore played a decisive part in frontier life. Later, in Andalusia and Murcia, the task of selecting the caballeros de cuantía was one undertaken by municipal officials. This does not preclude the fact that such caballeros may have lived on seigneurial estates. Yet, even in such cases, they were an urban phenomena in that they were related to the seigneurial towns. Indeed, by the end of the middle ages, a strong relationship had been built up between the caballeros and the towns. Thus some towns rejected individuals from their lists of such caballeros on the grounds that they 'lived' with a different señor or /

1 These frontier trends were encouraged by the Crown. For example, John II, in a letter of 22 June 1406 justifies privileges on the grounds that the frontier areas should be 'siempre poblados de omes de caballo': A.M.C., Sec.18, moneda forera, 2. See also Pescador in C.H.E. (1961), 207, 228 and in C.H.E. (1962), 72-4.

or town.¹

Two factors reinforced this relationship between the caballeros and the towns. In the first place there can be little doubt that the selecting of the caballeros de cuantía was done by town officials. A letter of John II to the town council of Jerez shows exactly how the procedure worked. Officials of each barrio or district in the town selected individuals on the basis of the tax assessments. An individual selected in this way became a caballero de cuantía after being presented to the town council by the district official.² The second factor was that some municipal posts became the preserve of these caballeros.

The word caballero, or knight, was used extensively by contemporaries and had a wide variety of meanings. However, it is quite clear that the caballero villano or caballero de cuantía was not the same knight as the caballero fidalgo and it would be useful, at this stage, to clearly stress the differences. The noble or hidalgo was born into hidalguía. Yet he was not born a caballero. It is true that most noblemen were also caballeros since the occupational role of the nobility was still considered to be military. But the noble was made a caballero, theoretically /

1 Pescador in C.H.E. (1961), 133-4.

2 A.M.J., Actas Caps., fol. 14R, 1426, letter dated 15 Sept. 1420.

theoretically, for some deed of military prowess. Moreover when he was dubbed a knight he had to be dubbed in a special ceremony. When he was dubbed a knight he did not gain any special privileges since he enjoyed these privileges because of his noble birth. All that happened was that he ceased to be a noble squire (caballero escudero) and became a noble knight.¹ The commoner, on the other hand, underwent no ceremony. He gained no privilege because of his birth. His status and privileges were obtained exclusively by military criteria. If he failed in his obligations he, unlike the noble, was deprived of his privileges. The difference was neatly summed up by a twelfth century statute which distinguished between a miles per naturam and a miles non per naturam.²

The word, caballero, therefore, was open to more than one interpretation and it is clear that, unless qualified, the status of the non-noble caballero was open to anyone with the appropriate wealth. It was, perhaps, for this very reason that negative criteria were applied to the status of caballero. A caballero or knight, whether noble or commoner, could not make a living by some mean /

1 The ennoblement of Miguel Lucas de Iranzo illustrates these points. He was first ennobled and then made a caballero on the battlefield in an impressive ceremony. C.D.R.A.H., 141-3 (xlix, 1455).

2 This was, in fact, a Portuguese statute but it sums up the Castilian distinctions perfectly: Lourie, ubi supra, p.72.

mean occupation. Already in the Siete Partidas it was declared that a merchant could not be a caballero. In the fifteenth century John II went even further and listed a whole set of occupations which were to be held as being incompatible with the status of caballero. All the occupations listed were artisan occupations. The reasons for these further negative definitions derived from a fear of excessive upward social mobility.¹

What privileges pertained to the nobility? A great many privileges were, of course, purely honorific. Minute regulations, for example, were laid down with respect to dress, insignia, and noble conduct.² The non-noble knights were allowed to enjoy many of these privileges.

Judicial privileges were of greater importance. The noble proper could only be tried by a royal tribunal and special judicial machinery existed to deal with cases involving the nobility. From the reign of Alfonso X onwards, special judges, the alcaldes de los hidalgos, dealt with such cases. These judges at first residing at court, were later incorporated into the chancillería created in the reign of Henry II.³ A noble could not be /

1 For dérogeance generally see S.P., Pt.ii, tit.xxi, leyes xii, xxv; O.R., Lib.iv, tit.i, ley ix and tit.ii, ley vi. This last law applied to tax farmers and collectors. A.M.L., doc.214, 19 June 1409, is a typical example of contemporary fears of excessive social mobility - John II attempts to obstruct the numbers of pecheros who are successfully claiming nobility in León.

2 For example O.R., Lib.iv, tit.i, leyes i,ii,iii.

3 On the chancillería or audiencia see F. Mendizábal, 'La real chancillería', R.A.B.M., xxx(1914), 61-72, 243-64, 437-52. In 1442 there was an attempt to have competence over the great nobility transferred to the noble dominated royal council: B.M., MS., 13259, fos. 332R-336R.

be imprisoned for debt. He could not be tortured save in cases of treason.¹ If sentenced to death this sentence could only be implemented by decapitation or starvation. The military equipment of both the nobility and the non-noble knights could not be confiscated for debt.² Many municipal offices were reserved to the nobility.³

The most highly treasured privilege, however, was that of exemption from royal and municipal taxation. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the general position was that the nobility proper and the non-noble caballeros enjoyed fiscal exemption from royal and municipal taxes. During the century, however, the Crown attempted to restrict this fiscal privilege in several ways. There was an attempt to limit exemptions in Andalusia. An attempt was also made to limit the immunity of those pecheros or tax payers who became non-noble caballeros. Detailed regulations were also laid down in order to prevent the extension of fiscal immunity to a privileged person's dependents. Finally a concerted effort was made to prevent tax paying land passing into the hands of tax exempt nobles.⁴

The /

1 But see O.R., Lib.iv, tit.ii, ley iv.

2 But see O.R., Lib.iv, tit.i, ley xii.

3 See below pp. 356-7

4 This whole problem of tax exemption is complicated in detail: in practice the great nobility were generally exempt, apart from the alcabala. A list of relevant evidence would be enormous. A general idea is given by O.R., Lib.iv, tit.i, leyes iv,v,vi; ibid, tit.ii, ley vi; ibid, tit.iii, ley xxi; ibid, tit.iv, ley xxiv. In practice the lesser nobility were often forced to pay taxes: see below, pp. 185-8

The juridical criteria of nobility, and the privileges they possessed, naturally figured prominently in court cases over claims of nobility. In such disputes, the rather dry criteria which have been described became legally meaningful, as the following two examples illustrate.

On the 19th of December 1395, Rodrigo Alvares de Toro, alcalde of the hidalgos at court, pronounced sentence in a case of hidalguía. The case centred on the status of a certain Gonzalo de la Torre who lived within the municipal jurisdiction of the council of Barajas near Madrid. Gonzalo de la Torre claimed that he was an hidalgo and consequently exempt from taxes imposed by the Barajas town council. This claim was challenged by a representative of the town council and by the royal procurator fiscal. Three basic arguments were put forward by the prosecution. With respect to lineage, it was alleged that Gonzalo de la Torre was the son and grandson of tax paying commoners. It was also claimed that he was neither the legitimate or bastard son of the man whom he declared to be his father. His claim to nobility was, in the second place, challenged on military grounds since the prosecution alleged that he failed to perform military service as a vassal along with the other hidalgos when summoned to do so by the Crown. Finally, it was alleged that the defendant had paid taxes for such a long period of time that this, in itself, proved that he had no right to claim the privileges of an hidalgo.

Gonzalo /

Gonzalo de la Torre, in his defence, summoned a good many witnesses whose evidence was of a very detailed nature. As far as military service was concerned, he argued that the summonses were never made public in the area in which he lived and that, in any case, he was too young to have performed military service. On the other hand, evidence was put forward showing that his forebears had, in their time, served along with other hidalgos in the campaigns of Alfonso XI, and in the civil wars between Pedro I and Henry II. Nor did the defence have any trouble in proving that Gonzalo de la Torre's lineage was beyond doubt, as far as legitimacy was concerned. Moreover, witnesses fully backed up his claim that he, and his father and grandfather, had lived like hidalgos and more especially that they had never paid taxes save those normally paid by other hidalgos.

As a result the alcalde of the hidalgos, in his sentencia, declared that Gonzalo de la Torre was an hidalgo and possessed all the privileges belonging to hidalguía.¹

As can be seen this case involved several of the legal criteria which have been discussed. Was the claimant an hidalgo by birth? Were his claims to nobility substantiated by military service performed when the Crown summoned all the nobility as vassals? Lastly had the claimant /

¹ The document of this case in R.C.V., ejecutorias, leg.1.

claimant and his family lived nobly? In effect this last problem inevitably centred on the most important privilege of nobility - had the claimant's family enjoyed exemption from taxation?

The second example involves the status of commoner knights. The son of a commoner knight could not inherit the noble privileges of his father unless he also performed the necessary military service and maintained the stipulated horse and equipment. On the other hand the widow of such a knight retained his privileges until her death, provided she remained chaste. On the 1st of August 1394, Luis Martínez de Santa Catalina, alcalde of Córdoba, pronounced sentence in a case involving the widow of a commoner knight of Córdoba. The tax collector of the district in which the woman, Catalina Martínez, lived, alleged that her assessed wealth made her liable to a payment of forty eight ms in taxes.

In her defence, Catalina Martínez denied that she had to pay this or any other amount. Her husband, Pedro Alfonso de Rojas, was one of the caballeros of Córdoba because he had maintained the appropriate horse and arms. Since his death she had remained chaste and was still his widow. Legally, therefore she had gained the status and privileges of her husband.

The prosecution then alleged that she had never married /

married Pedro Alfonso de Rojas and the rest of the case was taken up with this point. In the end the widow won her case.¹

2. The Wealth of the Nobility

Wealth was not a fundamental criteria for the juridical concept of nobility. Nevertheless wealth made all the practical difference between an impoverished nobleman of Guipúzcoa and the great estate owner of Andalusia.

What were the sources of wealth of the nobility? Two general fields of enquiry are worth following up. The first entails a succinct account of conclusions reached by historians on the juridical structure of lordships (señoríos). Such an account does not lead to any really useful results as far as the wealth of the nobility is concerned. The reason for this is that the evidence mainly consists of law codes and the diplomatic formulae employed by the chancery in the royal grants of such lordships. Nevertheless the results do provide a general framework of reference and, more important, they do show how even the juridical structure of lordship changed as a result of political and social developments in the fifteenth century.

The /

¹ The record of this case in A.D.M., Priego, leg.79, doc.1.

The second field of enquiry consists of using direct evidence relating to noble revenues and income. The granting of a lordship or señorio in Castile implied, as elsewhere in western Europe, a lordship over the land, a jurisdictional lordship, and a more personalised lordship over the people on the land. Here only some general points will be made about the situation in Castile - sufficient to make an intelligible general picture. What is of more direct concern is to try and delineate the sources of wealth derived from the seignorial regime.

1) Lordships and bastard lordships¹

In the fifteenth century the Crown granted señorios in perpetuity.² The recipient, moreover, could not only transmit the señorio to his relatives at death - he was also empowered to sell or gift the land as he wished. This latter power was usually qualified. A señorio could not be sold, gifted or exchanged to a foreigner or the Church without royal permission.³

Royal /

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- 1 For what follows see generally the excellent study by Moxó, 'Los señorios', Hisp. Separata (1964). A.M. Guilarte, El régimen señorial en el siglo xvi (Madrid, 1962) also contains useful material for the later middle ages.
- 2 Henry II, in his will, imposed restrictions on the señorios which he had created: Moxó, loc.cit., p.5. Other restrictions seem to have applied more specifically to members of the royal family. See, for example, the limitations imposed on the lordships held by the queen and princess in John II's will: C.D.R.A.H., III-25 (xlvi, 1454).
- 3 See, for example, the licence granted by Henry IV enabling an exchange between Alfonso de Carillo and the bishop of Sigüenza: B.N., M.S., 6388, fos. 425R-427R, 16 Nov. 1469.

Royal permission was also necessary for the foundation of a mayorazgo or imarrable entail.¹ The mayorazgo, of course, could contain several señoríos. It could also contain other sources of wealth - for example, specific gifts of alienated royal revenues which were granted by the Crown for varying purposes and which were not contained in the grants of señoríos. The mayorazgo did not necessarily settle all the family's wealth on the one son. Sometimes mayorazgos were set up for different individuals within a family and the daughters were usually provided for.² It does not seem to be the case, as is often suggested, that the mayorazgo returned to the Crown in default of direct male heirs. The mayorazgo documents, in fact, often made detailed arrangements for descent by female branches in default of male heirs.³

The document granting the señorío granted lordship over the land involved. Thus the formula used in almost all cases granted the

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- 1 For example Henry IV's licence to Rodrigo Portocarrero contained in A.D.M., Medellín, leg.3, doc.8, 15 May 1450. Often the Crown actually founded the mayorazgo on behalf of the recipient: for example, A.D.M., Vill., leg.4, doc.14 in which John II founds the mayorazgo of Pedro Yáñez (2 Jan. 1439).
- 2 For example Diego González de Toledo settled mayorazgos on two of his sons while also providing for his daughters: A.G.S., D.de C., leg.38, no.16, 28 Feb.1443.
- 3 Ibid. In default the mayorazgos were to go to the eldest daughter and her eldest son.

town (or place) of X... with its castle and fortress with all its land and area... and with all its meadows and pastures and hills and common and wooded lands and thickets and rivers and fountains and still and moving waters and with all the entrances and exits...

This direct lordship over the land, implied in the grant, obviously also implied some income. This would depend mainly on the structure of cultivation; direct exploitation by the lord, or income deriving from rents or share cropping.

The señorío in the fifteenth century also granted important powers of jurisdiction. The diplomata themselves, however, concentrated almost exclusively on the judicial powers. Almost without exception the jurisdicción civil y criminal, alta y baja, ymero y mixto imperio, was included in the grant. In some cases these powers were specified in greater detail or clearly included administrative as well as judicial powers.¹ There were, therefore, two elements to this jurisdictional lordship. The first involved the administration of justice. The second involved some degree of control over urban administration. Both these facets of jurisdictional lordship obviously implied revenues or income of some sort. Indeed the grants themselves usually specified the judicial fines /

¹ A.G.S., C. y J. de Hac., leg.1, no.20, 28 April 1445, for example, specifically names the officials whose nomination falls to the lord.

finer and punishments as belonging to the lord.

Lastly, the grants of señorio also included revenues. It seems impossible to give any precise juridical concept to this aspect of lordship. The most obvious way out of the difficulty is to argue that the revenues alienated in this way were not royal revenues as such - they were revenues paid to the king as seigneur and, therefore, were now paid to the new lord. The argument is deceptive. There was no hard and fast rule and the formula for alienating these revenues varied. Another approach, which has recently been suggested, envisages these revenues as accruing to the lord because of the personal dependence of the vassals on the land.¹ A good many of the revenues do, in fact, fit neatly into such a category and the concept, moreover, helps to include other residual powers belonging to the lord. These revenues might include such taxes as the fonsadera, portazgo, peaje, martiniega, yantar, and taxes on Jews and Moors. The formula of the grants, however, always added that the grant included all other rights and revenues attached and belonging to the señorio.² Hence this included such things as the revenues derived from the lord's mill and the /

1 Moxó, loc.cit., pp.50-3. The vasallos were invariably granted with the land and the jurisdiction.

2 Minor variations can be ignored. The most accurate picture is obtained by noting the reservations made by the Crown and ascribing all else to the lord.

the military service of the vassal, usually compounded by the fonsadera.

The Crown, of course, reserved to itself certain powers and revenues. Briefly these were as follows:-

- 1) The mayoría de la justicia. This was the supreme jurisdiction which implied the right to intervene in the señorío if the lord's justice proved to be in any way inadequate.
- 2) Coinage. Minting itself was reserved to the Crown and only the royal coinage could be used.
- 3) Taxes and regalian rights. These included the alcabala, the tercias, pedidos and monedas, moneda forera, and any metal deposits of gold and silver.¹

The juridical structure of lordships or señoríos which has been discussed applies to the later middle ages. The structure, however, was not constant through time and its general evolution shows how the fifteenth century structure marked a transition to the sixteenth century, and how these juridical changes were the reflection of changing political and social circumstances.

What were these changes in the general evolution of the /

1 Among the hundreds of grants of lordship I have only encountered two where no reservations were made. Both were issued by Prince Henry, later Henry IV: A.D.M., Alc.Mar., leg.13, doc.20 and Medellín, leg.1, doc.3. In at least the latter case John II made the usual reservations when he confirmed the grant: A.D.M., Medellín, leg.1, doc.8. Hence these reservations were invariably part of grants of lordship.

the juridical picture?¹ In the first place the general factors giving rise to the seigneurial complex changed. Until the end of the twelfth century the most important motivating factor was undoubtedly the rapid advance of the reconquest. This necessitated a process of re-population and defence which was best served by the creation of lordships granted to the nobility and the military orders. The extension of this process was also helped by the Cistercians and French influence generally. The thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century also gave rise to the same process although there was a marked geographical difference in that the needs of repopulation and defence were felt not in the north but in the south - in Extremadura, Andalusia and Murcia. However, from the twelfth century in the north and the early fourteenth century in the south, the principal causes for the setting up of lordships changed. Previously, the motivating factor had been the needs of repopulation and defence arising from reconquest. With minor exceptions, however, the reconquest now ceased until the taking of Granada. From now on the granting of lordships by the Crown was a matter of political expediency in order to win support from the nobility. From the reign of Henry II (1369-1379) up to and including the reign of the Catholic /

1 See Moxó, loc.cit., passim.

Catholic sovereigns the Crown was plunged into one political crisis after another. In the fourteenth century the civil war between Pedro the Cruel and Henry II also entailed wars against the Portuguese, English and Aragonese. In the fifteenth century there followed the minority of John II, the civil and national wars provoked by the infantes of Aragon, the noble uprisings against Henry IV, and the disputed succession to the throne and the Portuguese war. Hence the so-called mercedes enriqueñas (Henrician gifts) which included the alienation of crown lands to the nobility in order to buy political support. This period lasted until the reign of Charles V when the granting of lordships became a matter of raising money for a financially hard pressed monarchy.

One immediate and practical result of the Trastamaran grants of lordships was that, by the sixteenth century, the seigneurial structure of Castile largely derived from these grants of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Hardly any lordships from the previous period survived. In general, the civil wars of the later middle ages had thus brought about an almost complete change in those families controlling the lordships of the kingdom.

If the reasons for the creation of señoríos changed through time so too did the nature of the señorio itself. Right up to the end of the twelfth century in the north, and /

and the early fourteenth century in the south, the important element in the grant of the señorío was the lordship over land. These were territorially compact lordships with the emphasis on the land and not the jurisdiction. It is true that, by the twelfth century, there was a tendency toward the granting of immunities and administrative functions which marked a progression toward jurisdictional lordship. Yet there was a royal reaction against this trend, especially in the reign of Alfonso VIII (1158-1214), and even at the end of the thirteenth century some lordships were granted which made no mention of justice and which aimed at the repopulation and defence of newly reconquered territories.

It is obvious that the lordships of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were quite different in character. It is true that the royal grants make a point of carefully mentioning the lands involved. But this was pure formula. The lordship was no longer granted over newly reconquered land which had to be repopulated. It was granted over areas already settled where towns and villages had their own forms of organization.¹ Often one jurisdiction had to be abolished before another could be created. The emphasis /

¹ On 5 Nov. 1397, Henry III granted the señorío of Buendía to Lope Vázquez de Acuña: A.D.M., Ad., leg. 10, doc. 79. Ibid., doc. 80 deals with the complex process whereby Acuña had to adjust his newly received powers to the realities and conventions of the society in Buendía.

emphasis was now almost totally on the lordship of jurisdiction.¹ The lordships were no longer compact - on the contrary they consisted of a diffused collection of rights and immunities which the lord enjoyed over widely scattered areas. If a seigneurial map could be drawn it would show a quite chaotic state of interlacing, and sometimes conflicting, jurisdictional rights.² An exception to this general picture must be underlined. In the south of Castile - Extremadura, La Mancha, Andalusia, and Murcia - the territorially compact señoríos survived.

That the trend toward jurisdictional señoríos was complete by the fifteenth century is illustrated by a few remarkable grants which have received scant attention - if any. These few examples differed from the usual form in that the Crown granted to the recipient a specified number of vassals without specifying the land. The vassals had to be located geographically and then the land on which they lived was incorporated into the grant. Nothing shows more clearly the fact that lordship consisted of revenues and jurisdiction over people. On the 20th day of January 1453, for example, John II granted 300 vassals to the count of /

1 The process could be extremely complicated. When, in 1445, John II wished to grant Casas Buenas to Alfonso Alvarez de Toledo, the lordship and jurisdiction of Casas Buenas changed hands three times in the space of one week. A.G.S., C.y J.de Hac., leg.1, no.20.

2 For example the mayorazgos set up by Diego González de Toledo included places, jurisdictions, revenues and houses in areas scattered over the bishoprics of Calahorra, Burgos, Segovia, and Toledo. A.G.S., D.de C., leg.38, no.16.

of Medinaceli. These were to be selected from the area round the town of Atienza and a minor royal official was dispatched to locate them. Once they had been located a lordship was granted by John II over these vassals.¹

Even more explicit was the grant by Henry IV to Pero Lopez de Padilla of 300 vasallos in Vinuesa. Vinuesa itself was detached from the jurisdiction of the town of Soria - that is, it was to be a town with its own autonomy. But 300 vasallos from the town were given to Padilla along with the jurisdictional and territorial lordship 'belonging to the señorio of the places where ... these 300 vasallos might be.' Thus, within the town, 300 vassals along with their lands and the jurisdicción civil y criminal alta e baxa e mero e mixto imperio and the revenues went to Padilla. Ironically this grant of lordship reserved the usual regalian rights including metal deposits.²

The reasons for this insistence on vassals instead of land was probably due to two reasons.³ In the first place since people provided the revenues, the lords were only interested in them and not in the land on which they were /

1 A.D.M., Med., leg.65, doc.14, 9 Aug.1453.

2 A.D.M., Ad., leg.37, doc.42, 14 Sept.1471.

3 The weakness of the monarchy can be discounted since similar grants were made by the Catholic sovereigns. See the example examined by M. Grau, 'Un pleito secular de la comunidad y tierra de Segovia', E.S., vi (1954), 377-91.

were settled. Secondly, pressure by this time had become quite alarming in comparison to available resources. Political demand was outstripping supply.

This can be seen quite clearly in the operations which Henry IV carried out to grant a lordship to the count of Feria in 1470. Originally the king had granted a lordship to the count over three areas belonging to the señorio of the town of Badajoz. The town of Badajoz had already, however, suffered enormously in this respect and managed to persuade the king to grant Feria's lordship elsewhere. Henry IV, therefore, promised the count an alternative of 400 vassals elsewhere in the kingdom. He also promised that, if the 400 vassals had not been found within one year, they would be selected in the areas of the original lordship which had been granted. As a safeguard the count was empowered to see to the problem himself, although the actual counting of the vassals in the areas of Badajoz was to be undertaken by royal officials. Of crucial interest is the fact that the 400 vasallos were to be listed house by house and street by street. The result, of course, would simply imply that the revenues which these people had previously paid to the town of Badajoz would now be paid to the count of Feria. In the event this is exactly what happened. After the 400 vassals had been listed they were given to the count as /

as a lordship. The grant contained the usual formulae about lands, still and running waters, meadows, and pastures but the formulae obviously had no practical meaning.¹

These lordships were in many respects very similar to the typical pattern discussed above. There still remained the one outstanding difference, however, in that the emphasis was on people and not on the land. The extent of the land could, therefore, fluctuate according to the number of vassals living in the lordship.² These, however, were extreme cases. Yet the general picture is clear. Lordship was envisaged primarily over people and secondly over the land they lived on. In this respect, for example, the señorio granted by John II to Pedro de Acuña shows the right balance. Acuña had been granted lordships confiscated from the king of Navarre. For political reasons these now had to be returned to the king of Navarre. John II, therefore, determined to grant the lordship of Dueñas to Acuña as being worth 600 vassals of the 1,000 vassals which he was to receive for the lordships he had lost. The point, however, is that this fact is mentioned incidentally and in almost all other /

1 A.D.M., Feria, leg.25, doc.24, 31 Aug.1470.

2 Such a fluctuation was, in fact, envisaged in the grant, already cited, of 300 vasallos to the count of Medinaceli. Because of war and depopulation John II stipulated that some of the areas would have to revert to the Crown once the population drifted back since the lordship was over 300 vassals only.

other respects the señorío appears normal.¹

In conclusion, therefore, this first line of enquiry on the juridical pattern of landholding by lordships does not furnish much significant information on the sources of the nobles' wealth. Such an enquiry provides a general framework of reference and also underlines the fact that, by the fifteenth century, the nature of these lordships had changed. The very emphasis of the grants would lead us to suspect that land was the least important element in the lordships.

ii) The Problems of Seigniorial Income

According to Vicens Vives 'towards 1500, the nobles owned 97% of the land of the peninsula, either by direct proprietorship or by jurisdiction'. This generalization may be an exaggeration but, on the whole, it is a valid one from the general viewpoint of lordships.² More detailed surveys, such as those by Mitre Fernández³ and Highfield,⁴ merely serve to confirm the point by relating each noble title to each parcel of land. A long catalogue /

1 A.D.M., Ad., leg.28, doc.28.

2 Vicens, Manual, p.269. Vicens here uses the word 'nobles' to include the church and the urban aristocracy as well as the nobility proper.

3 E.Mitre Fernández, Evolución de la nobleza (Valladolid, 1968), especially pp.141-97.

4 J.R.Highfield, 'The Catholic Kings and the titled nobility of Castile', in Europe in the Late Middle Ages, ed. Hale, Highfield, Smalley (London, 1965), pp.358-85.

catalogue of lands and titles can thus be dispensed with - a thankful dispensation since it is argued here that such lordships did not provide the nobility with important sources of income.

What income did lordships provide to their holders in practice? A brief answer to this question is that the income was substantial but far below what a nobleman could succeed in obtaining from alternative sources. Moreover seigneurial income was relatively inelastic and this point must be related to the dramatic price rise of the fifteenth century.

In the first place there is little evidence that the Castilian nobility exploited their lands agriculturally. There is no real evidence of demesne farming. Thus, concepts such as 'crown land' or 'seigneurial lordship over land' hardly ever carry any implication of direct agricultural exploitation.¹ Instead the great nobles preferred, whenever possible, to lease the lands to tenants. The rents were usually paid in kind. Normally the payments consisted of grain but other forms of payment were possible. Thus, for example, the great Extremaduran family of the Figueroa received land rents in Zafra of grain, honey and wax.

The /

¹ In the case of 'crown land' there is never any such implication.

The amounts which these rents brought to their lords could be miserably small. In the example already quoted the Figuerola lord only received three arrobos of honey, fifteen libras of wax, and 418 fanegas of wheat from rents in Zafra for the three year period 1398-1400.¹ This income, by any standards, was exceedingly small. The example of the Medinaceli counts, however, shows that, at the other end of the scale, the amounts could be substantial. The accounts of the Genoese factor of the count of Medinaceli in Andalusia show that, during the four year period from 1425-28, the Medinaceli lands in Puerto de Santa María and Jerez brought in a total income of some 1,206 cahices of grain.² This latter example, however, is also exceptional and must be balanced by the absence of anything similar in the rest of the extensive Medinaceli lands in the kingdom of Castile.³

The two examples which have been cited are exceptional and what is needed is a complete view of the agrarian income of all the lands of a particular family. This is possible /

1 A.D.M., Feria, leg.11, doc.25, 20 Nov.1405. This is a sentencia against a seigneurial official and details, at length, the seigneurial income from this area. I have not included the minutiae of rents such as the 30 mrs per year for houses in Zafra.

2 A.D.M., Cog., leg.14, doc.52, account of Micer Domenigo. The total includes 208 cahices from the rent of mills which I have not deducted.

3 The vast documentation, however, does contain plenty of evidence on seigneurial dues and other sources of income. The point is that there is evidence for everything except a viable landed income.

possible in the case of the Sarmiento family. The example is especially apt since it reflects on the economic background of Pero Sarmiento - the noble who, in 1449, led the town of Toledo into a serious anti-semitic and anti-royal revolution.

In 1433 Diego Pérez Sarmiento, the father of Pero Sarmiento, died. Not all his lands went to the son. Indeed, precisely because his sister was to inherit some of the lands, a survey was carried out to assess the income of Diego Pérez at the time of his death (Table V¹). The revenue derived from seigniorial taxes is discussed below. The point to note is the poverty of the income deriving from the land - 3,835½ fanegas of grain from agrarian rents and 1,830 cántaras of wine from direct exploitation of vineyards.

Several points are worth noting about this survey. In general it shows that the state of agrarian rents on the Sarmiento lands was in poor shape. The revenue from Villelga was noted as being alienated. The rents of Boncoria de Yuso were in dispute. Even the vineyards which were worked a costa de casa (i.e. demesne farming) were in bad shape. The 600 cántaras of wine supposedly obtainable from Ocio had not, in fact, been collected for twenty /

1 For this Table and the relevant documents see Appendix E, pp. 565-6.

twenty years. This impression is confirmed by another survey which was carried out in greater detail in the areas round Almazán.¹ This more detailed survey shows that the general figures of the first survey were optimistically high, that the rents were paid in a mixture of wheat and barley, that the año y vez system was being used, and that leases seem to have been on a ten yearly basis. Yet, even without these reservations, the figures of the first survey were meagre.

At this stage it might be worth stopping - the figures speak for themselves. And yet this is not the end of the story. The situation for Diego Pérez's son, Pero Sarmiento, was to be infinitely worse since he did not inherit all these lands. Indeed, of the lands mentioned in Table V, he seems to have inherited some of the worst. In June 1463 Pero Sarmiento set up a mayorazgo. Roughly half of the areas mentioned in this mayorazgo were lands covered by the 1433 survey - Ocío, Lagrán, Marquinez, Caranca and Astulez, Sobrón, Valdegovia, and Miranda and Valverde. In 1433 these areas were providing the meagre total of 389 fanegas of grain, and 850 cántaras of wine. Yet, for the purely honorific post of chief butler at court Pero Sarmiento enjoyed an income of 12,000 mrs per year.²

Despite /

1 A.D.M., Med., leg.64, doc.21.

2 See E. Benito Ruano, 'Don Pero Sarmiento, repostero mayor', Hispania, xvii (1957), 483-504.

Despite the fact that the rents derived from lordship over land were not very high they had one advantage - they were paid in kind and were hit rather by the climatic fluctuations of agriculture than by the vicious monetary inflation of the century. The same was not true of the seigneurial dues paid in cash.

There were, of course, a far greater number of seigneurial dues than the martiniegas and yantares mentioned in the royal grants of lordship. To enumerate all these dues would be impossible but several points are worth examining.¹ Once again we are faced with the insignificant amounts involved. On the Sarmiento lands (Table V) the total is only 42,901 mrs. On the lands round Medinaceli there was a total of 81,645 mrs for the chief seigneurial tax, the martiniega, during the years 1432-33, compared with 241,400 mrs for the royal tax of the alcabala for the same region and period of time.²

The main problem with the seigneurial revenues, however, was that they appear to have been inelastic. A tax rendering the same amount of money each year, at a time of chronic inflation, was obviously subject to diminishing /

1 The names and nature of the dues varied from area to area. Here are examples, mainly self-explanatory, of dues from the Medinaceli lands: carneros para la mesa y despensa, tablero y cambio, tributo de las lanas, servicio e hervage, and entras. The examples are taken from various accounts, conditions of farms, and ducal ordinances.

2 A.D.M., Med., leg.40, doc.35, accounts of Samuel Abenxuxe for 1432-33.

diminishing returns. Worse still, some of the revenues not only declined in real value but actually, in some cases, dropped in nominal value. One example should illustrate this point. The period running from 1454-1466 was one of chronic price inflation. Yet during this period the seigneurial dues of Pedro de Avila, derived from his lands at Villafranca and Las Navas, actually declined in some cases in nominal value. Thus the chief revenue raiser, la renta delos fornos de la pes, worth 9,000 mrs in 1455 was only worth 7,600 mrs in 1466. Another tax worth 700 mrs in 1461 was worth only 210 mrs in 1464. Yet another had dropped from 1,300 mrs in 1460 to 800 mrs in 1463. In no case did any seigneurial due increase its nominal value although some, of course, retained the same nominal value throughout. During the same period the royal tax of the tercias, derived from the same areas, rose from 5,000 mrs in 1454 to 14,200 mrs in 1466.¹

The implications of the argument so far should be clear. It is only indirectly true to state that land was the source of all wealth. The great nobility were a parasitic group. They did not work the land themselves. In an age of massive price inflation the inelastic income provided /

¹ A.D.M., Med. (Las Navas), leg.257, doc.1, 2 July 1467, accounts of Alfonso Gonzalez for 1454-66.

provided by agrarian rents and seigneurial taxes was insufficient to provide for their needs and also for their increasing tastes in luxury. Given this situation it is not at all surprising to find men such as Pero Sarmiento far from their lordships and playing an active part in royal and town politics. A simple comparison of figures clinches the point. We have seen the figures for seigneurial revenues in Table V. In 1447 Pero Sarmiento held 145,067 mrs per year from the Crown. Subsequently he obtained another 144,067 mrs per year from the Crown as well as his salaries for municipal offices held in Toledo. Money was provided by lordship: it was also provided in much larger quantities by the Crown.¹ By what means did the nobility attempt to bridge the gap between an inconsiderable seigneurial income and the mounting costs of expenditure?

One way was to make seigneurial income as profitable as possible. There is evidence that the great noble houses screwed every penny possible out of their lordships. This would perhaps seem the most logical way out. However, care must be taken with this generalization. This was not the first reaction to the revenue-expenditure gap.

On /

¹ The figures for 1447 - 15,000 mrs for salaries, 78,467 for privileges, and 51,600 for lances - in L. Suarez Fernandez, 'Un libro de asientos de Juan II', Hisp., xvii (1957), 350 (Henceforth cited as Suarez, Libro). An incomplete list of subsequent acquisitions in Benito Ruano, ubi supra, p.499.

On the contrary, it seems to have been the last reaction. It was tried after all other ways had been exploited and failed. Up to the 1460s the Crown provided the necessary income. During the civil wars between Henry IV and Alfonso XII, however, the Crown finances collapsed. This was also the period of highest, almost vertical, price inflation. Moreover, with two kings, two administrations, and yet the same amount of royal revenue, the battle for royal revenues was crucial. The stakes were either all or nothing. The increasing or ruthless exploitations of lordships, therefore, date from the 1460s onwards. In October 1466, for example, the Stúñiga count of Béjar proceeded to levy 'contributions' and 'forced loans' on his lands amounting to a total of 633,000 mrs.¹ By 1482 the Pimentel count of Benavente had driven the town of Villalón to the most desperate measures in order to keep him supplied with revenues. In June, the town council had already had to pawn church plate to the Jews of Villalón in order to raise money. Less than a month later, the count was demanding payments of a new pecho or tax which he ordered to be levied to a total of 130,000 mrs in the Villalón area alone. That the situation was desperate /

1 Doc. dated 2 Oct. 1466 in R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483. The total was spread over 14 pueblos with Plasencia carrying the highest assessment.

desperate can be deduced from the fact that even the hidalgos and escusados were forced to contribute their share in order to make it possible to raise the money.¹ Rather less startling, but perhaps more effective in the long run, were the internal reforms of an administrative sort such as those of the dukes of Medinaceli in the late 1480s and in ordinances of 1504.²

iii) The Nobility and the Economy

The evidence shows that the nobility also attempted to impose their control on some of the lucrative economic activities. Care must be taken in approaching this problem since several misconceptions have to be cleared away.

In the first place there is the traditional picture of the Castilian hidalgo as being completely uninterested in economic matters. He either lived well at court, enjoying gracias and mercedes endowed upon him by the Crown, or he lived a miserable existence such as that depicted of the escudero in *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Alternatively, the Castilian noble was interested in 'honour', 'war', and 'booty'.

These /

1 R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, B, fos.26R,29R,29v-32R.

2 A.D.M., Med., leg.50, doc.7, 9 Jan.1489, shows a considerable increase in revenues resulting from changes in financial administration. The ordinances of 1504, ibid, leg.40, doc.25, aimed at reforming administration at the local level.

These generalizations are misleading. The great Castilian nobleman may not have been interested in capitalistic concerns of a mercantile or industrial nature - although this is not entirely true either. But this is a far different matter from saying that he was not interested in economic affairs.

It has been seen that the chief economic activities were of a 'primary' economic nature. It is true that there were industries such as the cloth and soap industry. But the most important money spinners were the export of wool, oil, leather, and iron. The export of these goods, the handling of bills of exchange - this was in the hands of merchants. But the great nobility also derived some benefit from these economic activities.

There was in fact a profound connection between the economic and social structures. The economic structure allowed for the existence of a powerful noble group in society who were not tied to the land by direct agricultural exploitation. They lived off the profits. The great flocks of sheep, for example, provided easy revenues for the great nobility and prevented a peasant class from attaching itself to the land in a significant way. The Castilian nobility, in fact, far from abdicating from the economic scene moved forward to command the heights of the economy. A deficient seigneurial income could be ignored by obtaining a monopoly over the soap industry /

industry or over the distribution of salt on a local basis. All of which does not mean to say that they were capitalistically minded. On the contrary, the interest was purely one of accumulating revenues.

A fairly close look at the history of the control of the soap industry in Andalusia proves this general thesis. As has been indicated the export of soap, especially to England, must have brought in considerable profits although no figures can be given. The dealings of the great Castilian nobility in this apparently small industry are truly astonishing. A monopoly existed throughout the fifteenth century and annuities from the profits of this monopoly were bought, sold, confiscated, and bequeathed. The annuities had a nominal value calculated, usually, in terms of the estimated value of the whole monopoly in the early fifteenth century.¹

That these annuities were highly desirable is proved by the fact that the political history of the century is mirrored in these dealings. The fall from power in 1421-22 of the constable, Ruy López Dávalos, is marked by the collapse of the monopoly which he had received as far back /

¹ In 1423 the Crown estimated the monopoly profits at 165,000 ms p.a. and established shares accordingly: A.D.M., Alc. Duc., leg.55, doc.17, 1 Sept.1423. A year later it was calculated that the profits had increased but that they should be shared according to the original proportions of each share. Ibid, doc.18, 20 July 1424. Hence a share of 5,000 ms p.a. represented 1/33rd of the profits in any given year. Often the shares were also expressed in confusing fractions. In 1447, for example, Alvaro de Luna's camarero gave 1/6th of $\frac{1}{4}$ s of 2/5ths of the Seville profits to the admiral's sister-in-law: Ibid, doc.34.

back as 1396 from Henry III. The uneasy political compromise at court in the 1420s is reflected by the setting up of a monopoly shared by the infante don Juan, Alvaro de Luna, constable of Castile, the admiral don Alfonso Enríques, and Diego Gómez de Sandoval, count of Castro and adelantado mayor of Castile.¹ The politically decisive period before and after the battle of Olmedo in 1445 is reflected by the imposition of an embargo on the share of the admiral² and the confiscation of shares held by Sandoval,³ the Mendoza archbishop of Santiago,⁴ and Ruy Díaz de Mendoza.⁵

The involvement of the great noble families may be illustrated by a few examples. The exceedingly powerful family of the Enríques (hereditary admirals of Castile) began by receiving a share in 1423 which was nominally worth 82,200 mrs.⁶ Four years later the admiral, don Alfonso Enríques, bought more shares from his Mendoza sister-in-law for 9,000 Aragonese gold florins.⁷ At the beginning of the 1440s his son was farming the Enríques shares for some 120,000 mrs.⁸ per annum. By the mid-1460s the grandson had taken over⁹ and, by the mid /

1 Henry III's actions from May 1396 to Dec.1397, granting a total monopoly to Dávalos, A.D.M., Alc.Duc., leg.55, doc.16. Confiscations and regranting of the monopoly in 1423-4, Ibid., docs.17,18.

2 A.D.M., Alc.Duc., leg.55, doc.28, 18 Jan.1445.

3 Ibid., doc.36, 15 March 1445.

4 Ibid., doc.30, 10 June 1447 and doc.32, 20 Aug.1447.

5 Contained in a document dated 1 Oct.1459, ibid., leg.56, doc.3.

6 Ibid., leg.55, docs.17 and 18, 1 Sept.1423 and 20 July 1424.

7 Ibid., doc.19, 15 Nov.1427.

8 Ibid., docs.24 and 25, 19 Aug.1440 and 15 Sept.1440.

9 Ibid., leg.56, doc.8, 15 Nov.1465.

mid-1470s, had not only consolidated the Enríquez shares of 190,000 mrs p.a. but also seems, with the backing of Ferdinand the Catholic, to have been well on the way to establishing a one man monopoly.¹ In short, the one man monopoly of the early fifteenth century, enjoyed by Ruy López Dávalos, was being recreated towards the end of the fifteenth century.

Other families, of course, also played a part in this profitable concern during the fifteenth century. These families included the Sandoval counts of Castro, the Mendozas, the Silva counts of Cifuentes, the Ponce de León counts of Arcos, and the Guzmán dukes of Medina Sidonia.² The latter two families provide interesting examples of different attitudes to these profits. The Ponce de León began business in 1439 and 1440 by buying shares of relatively low value from the count of Castro's nephew for 185,000 mrs.³ The interesting point, however, is that Pedro Ponce de León, count of Arcos and one of the most powerful noblemen in Castile, then proceeded to put up a 'front' man to farm the shares of the soap industry from other titular holders.⁴ By 1441 he had taken over the farm himself and had invested money in improving the industry⁵ /

1 Ibid, docs.19 and 21, 8 May 1475 and 19 Sept.1475.

2 The Sandoval, Mendoza and Silva families played a marginal role: ibid leg.55, docs.18,19,20,21,22,23,29,34 and leg.56, doc.4.

3 Ibid leg.55, docs.22 and 23, 2 May 1439 and 24 Feb.1440.

4 Ibid, docs.24 and 25, 19 Aug.1440 and 15 Sept.1440.

5 Ibid, doc.26, 24 Jan.1441.

industry. By the end of the 1460s the next count of Arcos had quadrupled the nominal value of the Ponce de León shares.¹ This procedure was in striking contrast to the Guzmán shares which ended up in the hands of administrative officials of the duke.²

How typical was this particular interest of the nobility in the soap industry? Certainly some of the great noble families were equally interested in the pastoral wealth of the country. Some of the nobility were extremely well favoured, geographically, to derive benefit from transhumance. The Velasco counts of Haro sat astride the northern end of the wool trade between Burgos and Bilbao and ended up in control of all the customs duties of the north coast trade. The Stunigas controlled one of the vital links between northern and southern transhumance at Béjar. The Pacheco marquis of Villena controlled the sheep routes into Murcia.³ Added to this is the fact that some of the sheep owners were the nobility. The Stuniga count of Plasencia owned some 25,000 sheep.

The /

1 Ibid leg.56, docs.11,12 and 14, 10 Sept.1469, 6 Nov.1469, 6 June 1471.

2 Ibid leg.55, doc.36, 14 Feb.1452; leg.56, docs.3 and 4, 1 Oct.1459 and 2 Oct.1459.

3 See the data on Velasco control of the north of Castile in A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.94; the Pacheco control of the sheep routes at La Roda, Chinchilla, Jorquera, Hellín and other places in ibid, doc.16; the desembargo of the diezmos de la mar printed in González, Col. de Cédulas, III, 76-8; L.Suárez Fernández, Canellas López, Vicens Vives, Los Trastámaras de Castilla y Aragón (Madrid, 1964), p.20 (Henceforth cited as Suárez, Los Trastámaras); A.Ballesteros, La marina cántabra (Santander, 1954), p.124.

The Mendoza marquis of Santillana had some 20,000 sheep of which 8,000 were exempt from the servicio and montazgo taxes.¹ Lastly it should be noted that the Mesta itself was dominated by the aristocracy since the chief executive office - that of entregador principal - was held by the Acuña family.²

Other economic interests also boosted the income of certain noble families. The Villandrando counts of Ribadeo, the Sarmientos, the Velasco counts of Haro,³ and the counts of Medinaceli all benefited from salines. In the latter case there is sufficient data to gauge the importance of the salt deposits generally. In the first place the counts of Medinaceli were assured a regular income by the obligatory consumption, on their own lands, of salt from the count's salines. In 1432, for example, revenue from salt in the lands round Medinaceli alone was worth 83,333 mrs.⁴ On top of this, however, the counts had privileges, dating back to the reign of Henry II, which /

1 Vicens, Manual, p.236; Suárez, Libro, p.332; A.D.M., Med., leg.40, doc.50 and leg.59, doc.2.

2 Held successively by Gómez Carillo de Acuña, Lope Vázquez de Acuña, and Pedro de Acuña; Suárez, Los Trastámaras, p.5.

3 It is doubtful whether the Sarmientos benefited greatly from the Añana salines: Benito Ruano, ubi supra, 487, 493. The Velasco owned the Rusio salines and also drew 40,000 mrs p.a. from salines in Castile. The count of Ribadeo controlled the salines of Ribadeo. See Suárez, Libro, pp.335,341.

4 The three cuadrillas round Medinaceli were assigned 5,000 fanegas of salt consumption which was calculated at 16 mrs and 4 cornados per fanega in 1432 and 1433. The same pattern was still in operation in the early sixteenth century. A.D.M., Med., leg.40, docs.35 and 57.

which allowed their salt to be sold anywhere in the kingdom¹ - privileges which inevitably led to disputes with farmers of royal salines in other areas. The income from this source must have been quite considerable since, at the end of the fourteenth century, an acrimonious dispute arose when the adelantado mayor of Castile, Gómez Manrique, tried to gain control of the Medinaceli salines at Santhelises. The dispute was serious enough for Henry III to try and solve the problem himself.²

The really important fairs also ended up under the indirect control of the great nobility. The fairs at Medina del Campo may well have owed their origin to Ferdinand of Antequera and they remained a favourite centre of attraction for his wife and sons.³ The Enríquez controlled the fairs at Medina de Rioseco. The Pimentel counts of Benavente controlled the fairs at Villalón. In the 1480s the Pimentel and Enríquez united in an attempt to prevent the Velasco from starting a fair at Cuenca de Campos.⁴

The evidence presented so far, therefore, suggests that /

1 The only limitation - no access to markets in Atienza, Soria, and Almazán - aimed at protecting the royal salines of the area. A.D.M., Med., leg.92, docs.3,5,6,12, dating from 3 Aug.1379 to 6 Feb.1411.

2 Details of this complicated dispute in a relación by Gaston de la Cerda to Henry III and in a judicial enquiry: A.D.M., Med., leg.93, doc.5, undated and leg.92, doc.7, 24 Oct.1394.

3 Suárez, Los Trastámaras, p.8.

4 R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, B, fos.37R, 38V.

that the great Castilian nobility profited from the main economic activities. Yet, there is little evidence that there was a direct economic involvement. Indeed it is clear that in the majority of cases the nobility lived indirectly off the profits. The united action of the Pimentel and the Enríquez against the nascent fair at Cuenca de Campos in the 1480s, for example, was in fact instigated by those who stood to benefit most, - the town council of Villalón.¹

Only in the south can a direct involvement in economic affairs be discerned. This contrast between the north and the south did not really coincide with the distinction between the fragmented jurisdictions of the north and the territorially compact señoríos of the south. Instead it coincided with the economic distinction between a subsistence orientated economy in the centre and an export orientated economy in the south. It has already been shown that the Ponce de León were willing, at one stage, to take a direct interest in the farming of the soap industry monopoly. In fact the direct involvement in economic affairs by both the Guzmán and Ponce de León families contrasts sharply with the rather parasitical involvement of the Castilian nobility proper. In the 1460s the Ponce de León and Guzmán managed to wrest control of /

1 Ibid, fo.37R.

of the leather trade centred on Seville.¹ Both families took a direct part in the tunny fisheries of the south and actually fought for control of it.² That this involvement was not purely one of monopolists is proved by documentation which shows that the Guzmán dukes of Medina Sidonia were directly involved in Castilian expansion and exports. Ducal officials dealt directly with foreign merchants. Ducal officials directly administered the ducal tunny fisheries, saw to the export of wine, and prepared the ships owned by the duke for their voyages to London and the Canary Islands.³

iv) The Crown as a source of income for the nobility

There were four main ways by which the nobility received regular annual income from the Crown. One of these ways was by privilege.⁴ Briefly, the royal privilege or merced was either held for life (merced de por vida) /

1 R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483 (291).

2 A.D.M., Med., legajos 13 and 14 contain some hundreds of documents on these disputes for the period 1445-1545.

3 Evidence on the activities of ducal officials in A.P.S., V. Gonzalo Bernal, fo.51V; ibid, lll. Francisco Sánchez, fo.26V; ibid, IV. Pedro Alvarez, fos.247,268, 270,274,411. Examples of ducal ships to London and the Canaries in ibid, lll. Francisco Sánchez, fo.20V and VII. Pedro González, fo.73V. See also the grant, by John II in 1449 to Juan de Guzmán, of a lordship near Cape Bojador: Codoín, xxxvi, 499-501.

4 To avoid needless complications the word 'privilege' refers only to mercedes of royal revenue. Other privileges did not add substantially to noble revenues.

vida) or held in perpetuity (merced de juro de heredad). In the latter case the amount alienated by the Crown was lost forever: these were the privileges known briefly as juros.¹

The amounts involved were usually considerable. Moreover the acquisition of juros over a lengthy period of time could produce a large amount of revenue to any one noble family. The counts of Medinaceli, for example, piled up a substantial income in this way throughout the century. In May 1454, John II granted the count 50,000 mrs p.a. in perpetuity.² Henry IV added 100,000 mrs p.a. in 1464, 20,000 mrs p.a. in 1465, 400,000 mrs p.a. in 1467 - all in perpetuity.³ In 1469 the count of Medinaceli acquired another 30,000 mrs p.a. in perpetuity.⁴ To this already large total the Catholic sovereigns added 406,000 mrs p.a. in perpetuity in 1478, and 4,500,000 mrs p.a. for life in 1492.⁵ These privileges by themselves do not constitute the total held by Medinaceli but they clearly demonstrate that mercedes provided an enormous income for the /

1 Both kinds of privileges were further classified by the financial officials, for book keeping purposes, into salvado and de cada año.

2 Confirmed by Henry IV, 17 Nov. 1464. All these mrs had been sold or renounced by the count by Nov. 1465. A.D.M., Med., leg. 25, doc. 2.

3 Privileges of 12 May 1464, 20 May 1465, 10 Nov. 1467: ibid., leg. 25, docs. 3 and 6.

4 Bought from Garci Alvarez de Toledo and confirmed by Henry IV: ibid., doc. 4, 15 Dec. 1469.

5 Privileges dated 24 Jan. 1478 and 1 Oct. 1492: ibid., docs. 7 and 8.

the nobility.

In general terms the importance of the privileges can be seen by referring to the tables. In 1429, 26.46% of the estimated total gross income of the Crown was earmarked for the payment of these privileges. (Table VII¹). Of the incomplete total of revenue alienated by recurrent expenditure in 1447, 39.49% was made up by privileges (Table X²).

There are several other points which must be briefly mentioned with reference to these privileges. It was unusual for a privilege to state specifically the reasons motivating the grant by the Crown. No definite conclusions on this point can therefore be established although it is quite clear that the political situation played an important part.³

It is also necessary to describe briefly how these privileges were in fact paid, since this affected the crucial issue of the control of royal revenues in the localities. These privileges were not paid out in cash by the central royal administration. Instead the amounts were paid each year by officials of the local administration /

1 See Appendix G below p.568

2 See Appendix J below p.572.

3 Occasionally a specific reason is given. Martin Fernandez de Cordoba, for example, was granted 40,000 ms p.a. for life in recognition of his services as ambassador at the council of Constance: A.D.M., Com., leg.24, doc.63, 22 Sept.1418 and ibid. leg.37, doc.6, 20 June 1420.

administration. Sometimes these payments were made as a matter of course: sometimes they were paid at the command of libramientos issued by the central administration.¹ Furthermore, the privileges stated the exact amounts to be paid out from specific taxes in specific areas.²

Finally, it is important to note that the juros, or privileges in perpetuity, could be disposed of at the discretion of the holder. Usually the permission of the Crown was necessary if juros were to be alienated by the holder to the Church or to foreigners.³ Otherwise there was no real obstacle to a holder of a juro who wanted to bequeath, barter, sell, or renounce it.⁴

The great nobility also received regular annual payments from the Crown for military duties which they were supposed to perform. By far the most important payments were /

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- 1 The term libramiento in most cases referred to assignments but could also, in rare cases, refer to décharges. There are few surviving libramientos. A.D.M., Ad., leg. 24, docs.4,7,9,13 are libramientos of privileges held by Pero Manrique from 1444 to 1453.
 - 2 For example the 70,000 mrs p.a. held by Portocarrero were assigned on specific alcabala revenues in Trujillo and Alfonso XII's grant of 120,000 mrs p.a. to the marquesa of Villena was assigned on the servicio and montazgo. A.D.M., Medellín, leg.5, doc.30, 23 Oct.1456 and R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483, 4 Dec.1467.
 - 3 No licence was needed if the Church itself disposed of juros. See, for example, the sale of a juro of 1,500 mrs p.a. by the convent of Almadilla to the countess of Feria: A.D.M., Feria, leg.47, doc.23, 14 Jan.1470.
 - 4 Though usually described as 'renunciations' some of these dealings in juros were sales or barter, as the following examples show. Purchase by the count of Feria of a juro of 5,000 mrs p.a. on the almojarifazgo of Seville, A.D.M., Feria, leg.27, doc.76, 22 Feb.1396; Pedro de Acuña surrenders 20,000 mrs from his juro of 25,000 mrs p.a. to the Crown in return for land, ibid, Ad., leg.11, doc.53, 2 March 1454; Pedro de Silva buys 10 escusados for 17,000 mrs, ibid, Med., leg.309, doc.36.

were those known as tierra (literally land) which was the Castilian version of the English money fee and the French fief rente. This Castilian form of military obligation was first organized, on a large scale, in 1390 and, throughout the fifteenth century, it consisted of a payment by the Crown of 1,500 mrs p.a. for every lance. Other payments were also made by the Crown for tenancies of castles and for defence of the areas along the Moorish frontier.¹

Once again the amounts involved were considerable. As early as 1390, for example, the Guzmán count of Niebla was given an annual income of 50,000 mrs as tierra.² In 1447 the admiral had 142,500 mrs p.a. for 95 lances.³ In the 1429 budget 22.47% of the estimated gross royal income was set aside for the payment of these fiefs-rentes for a total of some 9,000 lances (Table VII)⁴.

Tierra payments were made in much the same way as privileges were. The connection with land as such was thus virtually non-existent since the amounts were assigned on /

1 On the Tierra system see Cortes, ii. 460-4 (1-5, 1390) and Highfield, ubi supra, p. 382.

2 A.D.M., Priego, leg. 38, doc. 38, 28 June 1390.

3 Suárez, Libro, p. 331.

4 Appendix G, below { 568

on royal taxes in the localities.¹ Unlike privileges, however, these money fees were not subject to buying and selling, although they could be inherited or even renounced to a third person.

A third source of income for the nobility was that of mantenimientos. The mantenimientos, literally 'upkeep', were payments made each year to individuals according to their social and perhaps political status. Accordingly the largest mantenimientos were paid to members of the royal family with substantial amounts also being paid to the great nobility. In 1429, 7.91% of the total gross income of the Crown was set aside for payment of these mantenimientos. (Table VII)²

The fourth and last source of regular income provided by the Crown consisted of salaries paid to office holders. These salaries were known as raciones and quitaciones.

Inevitably the size of these salaries varied. In 1447 the constable had a salary of 40,000 ms p.a., the admiral 22,000 ms p.a., the keeper of the secret seals 12,000 ms p.a., and the 'official of the knife' 6,000 ms p.a.³ /

1 In this respect Highfield, ubi supra, p.382 and Suárez, Libro, p.325 tend to be misleading. The libramientos, as well as mercedes, were, of course, usually assigned on taxes near where the holders lived. Examples of tierra libramientos in favour of Pero Manrique in A.D.M., Ad., leg.24, docs.10,11,12, and docs.14-20.

2 Appendix G, below p.568

3 For these and other examples, Suárez, Libro, passim.

p.a. Many of these salaries were for purely honorific posts. There was, in fact, a vast network of nominal posts held by the great nobility in central and local government. Many of these posts were relics of a previous age yet they retained enough of their competence to enable the holder to supplement his official salary with perquisites. In the 1429 budget 15.44% of the total royal income was set aside for the payment of these salaries, the vast majority being held by the great nobility. (Table VII)¹

It would be tedious to establish which great noble families actually drew which salaries.² But it is important to note that in many cases the nobility managed to make these posts hereditary. Thus the Enríquez, for example, were hereditary admirals of Castile. Moreover political support could be bought at a time of crisis by increasing a salary. Thus the Fernández of Córdoba, who held the post of alcaide de los donceles (master of the pages) throughout the fifteenth century, had their salary raised from a mere 4,000 mrs p.a. to a sizeable 20,000 mrs p.a. by Alfonso XII.³ In some cases the nobility acted unilaterally /

1 Appendix G, below p. 568

2 The evidence is not lacking and is conveniently gathered together: for example, A.G.S., Q.de C., leg.1, passim.

3 A.D.M., Com., leg.24, doc.62, 30 July 1466.

unilaterally without even consulting the Crown. Rodrigo Portocarrero, count of Medellín, for example, quite arbitrarily included his post as repostero mayor (chief butler) in the mayorazgo which he founded in 1462. In the event, despite protests from royal officials who pointed out that the post should revert to the Crown, Henry IV allowed the mayorazgo to stand and it was also confirmed at a later date by the Catholic sovereigns.¹

The Crown, of course, also provided wealth for the nobility indirectly. The towns, the Church, and the military orders - all these provided the nobility with alternative sources of wealth. For the moment it is enough to note that, although these sources of wealth were not charged directly on the royal treasury, they were highly desirable.² In 1450, for example, the Velasco count of Haro managed to obtain from John II various promises regarding royal policy on easily tapped sources of wealth. These included a promise that all income held off the Crown by any of the count's entourage should be regranted by the decision of the count if it should revert to the Crown, a promise that the count's advice would be taken on all other alienations of royal income, a promise that /

1 A.D.M., Medellín, leg.3, doc.8, 20 May 1462. Usually, however, royal permission was requested first: see the example of the count of Castro bequeathing his posts as adelantado mayor and canciller del sello de la poridad in ibid., Ad., leg.37, doc.28, 25 Oct.1444.

2 See below Chap. IV, v.

that royal backing would be given for the count's candidate for the second bishopric falling vacant, and a promise that the king would, in all other appointments in the Church, try and please the count.¹

v) General analysis of noble income derived from the Crown

It is now time to tackle the problem of the actual sums of money involved in the relationship between the Crown and nobility. The statistical tables on the whole speak for themselves. Generally the tables have been drawn up with two problems in mind. How much of yearly royal income was alienated to the nobility on a yearly and recurrent basis? How much annual revenue did particular noble families hold from the Crown?

For purposes of comparison Table VI gives data on royal income at different stages in the fifteenth century.² How much of this royal revenue was creamed off to the nobility? Table VII gives a breakdown of the recurrent expenditure envisaged in the 1429 budget.³ Money fiefs (tierra) - 22.47% of the gross royal income - were almost exclusively paid to the nobility with the great nobility holding /

1 Agreement between John II and the count in BN., MS., 638, fo.57R, 12 Feb.1450.

2 Appendix F, below p.567

3 Appendix G, below p.568

holding the greatest number. Mantenimientos, 7.91% were, by definition, paid to individuals of the highest social status. The great bulk of the mercedes or privileges, 26.46%, went to the nobility. So far, therefore, an extremely conservative estimate would suggest that 50-55% of the total gross income of the Crown ended up in the hands of the nobility. It must not be forgotten, however, that a good deal of the expenditure on defence and salaries - almost certainly more than half - also ended up in noble pockets. In fact a cautious estimate would show that 65% of the royal gross income went to the nobility.¹

How much annual income did members of the great nobility actually hold from the Crown? Without doubt the two most important political figures of the fifteenth century, apart from the Castilian kings themselves, were Alvaro de Luna and the Infante Juan, son of Ferdinand of Antequera, leader of the opposition against Alvaro de Luna, and successively king of Navarre and king of Aragon. These two men were undoubtedly of the highest political and social status. In both cases it is possible to assess their income and compare it with Crown income.

In 1429 the Infante Juan, already king of Navarre, and nine other members of his political persuasion had their incomes confiscated by John II. The income lost by /

¹ This 65%, however, included some large sums paid to members of the royal family.

by this group amounted, by itself, to about 11-12% of the royal income in the same year. Of more particular interest, however, is the income confiscated from the king of Navarre himself (Table VIII)¹. All this income was directly held from the Crown. The total shows that he held, from the Crown alone, a total worth about 5% of the royal gross income in the same year and equivalent to almost 50% of the royal net income.

Much more data is available for the king of Navarre's income in 1444 (Table IX)². The sources of this income have to be carefully distinguished. In the first place there was the revenue held directly from the Crown. Compared with similar data for 1429, the king of Navarre now held less revenue from this source - 2,881,697 mrs in 1444 compared with 2,988,729 mrs in 1429.³ Moreover, since royal income had increased over the same period, this only represented 3.92% of royal income in 1444 compared with 4.91% in 1429. To this figure, however, must be added revenues held by the king of Navarre from royal taxes reserved to the Crown in grants of lordship - alcabalas, almojarifazgos, and tercias. Also included in the data are sources of income deriving from lordship - martiniegas, yantares, and infurciones. Finally we have some sources of income, portazgo, escrivanía, cabeza de pecho de judíos, which, although usually reserved to the /

1 Appendix H, below p. 569

2 Appendix I, below pp. 570-1.

3 These figures include sums which the king of Navarre, in his turn, had alienated.

the Crown, were sometimes granted with lordship. If we class these last sources as indefinite sources of income, then the king of Navarre derived 93.3% of his income from the Crown, and only 5.5% of his income from his lordships. Even despite the fact that no agrarian rents, if indeed he held any, are included, the figures show not only that the Crown provided a vast annual income but that this income was vastly superior to income derived from other sources. In general terms, the total Castilian income of the king of Navarre in 1444 was equivalent to 10.36% of the estimated gross royal income for the same year.

In 1444 the king of Navarre's total estimated annual income was in the region of $7\frac{1}{2}$ -8 million mrs p.a. In the late 1440s and early 1450s Alvaro de Luna's income was in the region of 6-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ million mrs p.a., although this figure does not include income derived from his position as master of the order of Santiago. This income was equivalent to about 8.5% of royal income in 1444 or 7.3% of royal income in 1458. A detailed analysis of the sources for Luna's income is impossible but what is clear is that once again the overwhelming majority of his income was derived /

derived from the Crown.¹

Clearly the greatest political figures of the age had massive revenues at their disposal and equally clearly the Crown provided most of this income. What about the rest of the great nobility?

Some detailed examples are given, in Tables X and XI, of income held by members of the great nobility directly from the Crown.² The basis for the data is extracted from a Libro de Asientos of 1447 - a document which lists the alienation of royal income to specific individuals. Unfortunately this Libro is incomplete so that general conclusions on the total amount of revenue alienated by the Crown are impossible to make. However, despite the fact that the Libro is incomplete, some generalizations are not affected by this. The income of any individual listed in the Libro can be compared, not with the incomplete total of the Libro itself, but with royal income. Moreover, the actual sources of the income can be /

1 This estimate of Luna's income is based on three sources. There are two surveys for his income in 1453 in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.540 (676 antiguo), fos. 10,11,12 and 237,238,239. An approximate total can only be reached because, although the surveys largely agree with each other, some figures differ and some revenues do not appear on both lists. Moreover figures given in the 1447 Libro de Asientos, not included in these two surveys, must be taken into account. A detailed analysis of these figures is not attempted since it would have to be by area and not by distinguishing royal from lordship revenues.

2 Appendices J and K, below pp.572-3

be ascertained. What picture emerges?

The largest incomes have been tabulated and these show that, in 1447, the great noblemen of Castile held revenues directly from the Crown which were equivalent to $\frac{1}{3}\%$ -2% of the royal income for 1444. Thus, at one end of the scale, the admiral and his brother had a total worth 2.14% of gross royal income and, at the other end of the scale, the count of Trastámara had a total equivalent to .45%. In general terms the 14 noblemen listed held a total of 7,771,257 ms p.a. which was equivalent to 10.56% of gross royal income in 1444 and was greater than the net income of the Crown in 1429 and 1463. Moreover, it should be noted that, although the Crown did provide the main source of the great nobility's income, other sources of revenue have not been added on to the total.

The general conclusion from all the statistical data is obvious. About two thirds of royal income was alienated to the nobility. These alienations constituted the chief income of the nobility - as much as 93.3% in the case of the king of Navarre.

Finally it is worthwhile glancing at the theoretical justifications of these alienations by the Crown. Let us assume that the noblemen listed in Table XI actually did do some work for their salaries and actually did perform the /

the military service in return for tierra.¹ It still remains true that all the noblemen listed held the greatest part of their incomes quite gratuitously and freely either as privileges (mercedes) or as privileges and mantenimiento. In six of the cases 70-80% of the income was provided by the Crown freely and with no corresponding obligation. In another six cases 60-70% of income was provided in this way. In only one case - the count of Trastámara - did this gratuitous income fall to 51.27% of the total income provided by the Crown. Political bribery by the Crown? Political pressure by the nobility? Perhaps the two concepts are interchangeable.

Yet the whole story of noble income is not yet complete. On the whole the aspects discussed so far illustrate the problem from the centre of political activity. It is now time to return to the lordship - for here, if anywhere, the real picture of the fifteenth century crisis in government and society begins to appear.

vi) The control of royal finances at the local level

It has been seen that in the juridical grants of lordship the Crown always reserved to itself certain taxes such /

¹ An assumption that is unjustified.

such as the alcabalas and tercias.¹ In practice royal taxation in seigniorial areas often fell into the hands of the nobility. Moreover, the great nobility also managed to attain some degree of control over royal taxation in crown land areas.

Inevitably the taxes reserved to the Crown in a lordship were used for the payment of privileges and tierra which the lord held from the king. When, for example, the Catholic sovereigns granted 406,000 mar p.a. in perpetuity to the duke of Medinaceli, this sum was all assigned on royal taxes collected in the duke's lordships.² This system was reinforced by attempts to tidy up existing assignments so that they would correspond with the geographical areas of lordships. These attempts were reflected in the buying, selling and bartering of privileges, but it was a process which was also assisted by the Crown. The example of payments assigned on royal revenues in Puerto de Santa María illustrates this point. The town of Puerto was in the lordship of the Medinaceli house. Naturally, some of the income held by Medinaceli from the Crown was paid from royal taxes in the town. Yet other members of the great nobility were assigned sums of money on the same sources /

¹ See above p.124.

² A.D.M., Med., leg.25, doc.7, 24 Jan.1478: 226,000 on the alcabalas, tercias, and aduanas of Medina, Luzón, Barahona, Arcos, Sotillo, Deza, and Zigueta; 140,000 on the alcabalas of Puerto, Enciso, and Arbeteta; 40,000 on the alcabalas and tercias of Cogolludo.

sources of revenue. This was an unsatisfactory state of affairs for all concerned.¹ Consequently, in 1467, Alfonso XII agreed to a request by the duke of Medinaceli that Medinaceli assignments should be concentrated in the town and assignments to other members of the nobility should be re-assigned elsewhere.² Clearly, therefore, libramientos in favour of the nobility which were assigned on royal taxes in their lordships, helped to place royal revenues in the señoríos under noble control.

Royal revenues in seigneurial areas further augmented the income of the great nobility since privileges existed which, instead of alienating specific sums of money, actually alienated the taxes themselves. In short, the very taxes reserved to the Crown in grants of lordship were in fact alienated by separate privileges. Even the alcabala tax was alienated in this way and the large number of such privileges shows that this was not an exceptional occurrence.³ It should also be noted, moreover that lordship and royal taxes, though granted by separate /

1 The duke of Medina Sidonia, for example, found trouble in collecting money assigned on Puerto revenues since the town argued that priority should be given to the duke of Medinaceli. Agreement over these difficulties in A.D.M., Cog., leg.3, doc.79, 8 July 1467.

2 Ibid, doc.78, 14 March 1467.

3 For example, the grant by Henry III of all the tercias of the Olmedo area to Arias Gómez de Silva and by Alfonso XII of the portazgo of Alcalá la Real to Alfonso de Aguilar. Ibid, Med., leg.309, doc.10, 2 May 1399; ibid, Priego, leg.39, doc.4, 26 Aug.1465.

separate privileges, were often given to the same individual. Indeed the two separate privileges of lordship and royal taxes within the lordship could lead to an identification in subsequent confirmations of lordship, and founding of mayorazgos. In 1461, for example, Henry IV granted the lordship of La Puebla de Montalbán to don Juan Pacheco after confiscating it from Alvaro de Luna's widow and, in the same document, he also included the tercias, escusados, and derechos del paso de ganado, which the countess had held from the Crown by separate privileges.¹ Another case, involving the lordship of Medellín, was startling by the totality of the alienations which were made.

In 1449 don Rodrigo Portocarrero was given the lordship of Medellín and its lands by the prince of Asturias who was later to become Henry IV. This grant of lordship was confirmed by John II and in this confirmation the usual revenues were reserved to the Crown.² Yet already, in 1449, other privileges had alienated these royal revenues to Portocarrero. On the 14th of April the taxes on Jews and Moors were granted to him for life. On the 3rd of May one fifth of the proceeds of the alcabalas and tercias were added. Finally, on the 15th of November, the /

1 C.D.R.A.H., 226-34 (lxviii, 24 Dec.1461).

2 A.D.M., Medellín, leg.1, docs.3,4,8, 15 Nov.1449, 22 Dec.1449, 15 May 1453.

the proceeds of all royal revenues were granted to him for life. Within one year, therefore, both the lordship and all the revenues reserved to the Crown went to Portocarrero.¹ It is true, perhaps, that there was an important difference in that the lordship was granted in perpetuity whereas the royal taxes were only granted for life. A glance at the Portocarrero mayorazgo founded in 1462, however, shows that the privileges for life could be made hereditary.²

The examples quoted above are not, of course, meant to prove that all royal taxes in seigneurial areas were alienated by the Crown to the lords of the señoríos. Clearly the Crown in many cases still reserved the royal revenues. Yet even here two more factors tended to place at least some of this income at the disposal of the nobility.

The administration and collection of royal taxes in seigneurial areas often depended on the seigneurial and not on the royal officials. In essence this was simply a matter of political power at the local level and the noble lord /

1 Alienation of these revenues at the dates stated in ibid., leg.3, doc.19, and leg.5, docs.4 and 5. The royal revenues of four other areas were also included. Further inroads into royal reservations in Medellin, but on the jurisdictional side, ibid leg.6, docs.13,14,15 and leg.1, docs.1,2.

2 Ibid., leg.3, doc.8, shows that many revenues held de por vida were included in the mayorazgo, 20 May 1452, and confirmed by Henry IV and the Catholic sovereigns.

lord was invariably more powerful than the royal tax farmer.¹ In October 1478, for example, an agreement was drawn up by don Alfonso de Aguilar and the royal official who was charged with levying royal customs dues and other taxes in the town of Priego. The agreement shows that the administration and effective control of these taxes lay with the lord: only one quarter of the proceeds of these royal taxes was to go to the royal official while three quarters was retained by don Alfonso de Aguilar.² This state of affairs existed all over Castile. In the Aguilar lands the seigneurial administration also collected the royal pedidos, monedas, and alcabalas, as well as the customs duties.³ In the Medinaceli lands the alcabalas were collected by seigneurial officials throughout the fifteenth century⁴ and, in Villalón, the Pimentel administration saw to the hermandad revenues as well as to the royal pedidos and monedas.⁵

The /

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- 1 See, for example, the letters of the Infante Ferdinand to Diego Fernández and John II to Pedro Alvarez de Osorio printed by Serrano, 'Los señores de Baena y Cabra', B.R.A.H., lxxxvii (1925), 456-7, 460-1.
 - 2 The agreement covered the period 1478-80: A.D.M., Priego, leg.20, doc.74.
 - 3 Ibid, leg.14, doc.8, 18 April 1459; leg.20, doc.66, 14 June 1453; leg.30, doc.27, 19 Feb.1452, doc.28, 21 Jan. 1455, doc.29, 18 April 1459: all these show royal officials having to deal with the seigneurial administration for taxes in the Aguilar lands.
 - 4 For example ibid, Med., leg.40, doc.57, accounts of 1432-3; ibid, Cog., leg.3, doc.75, 13 March 1459, receipt for alcabalas collected by seigneurial officials; ibid, Med., leg.50, doc.7, 9 Jan.1489, farm conditions of the seigneurial administration for tax farms which included the alcabalas.
 - 5 R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, A, fo.12R, pedidos of 1445; ibid, B, fos.23R-24R, 26R, 32V-37R, hermandad revenues in 1482.

The fact that royal revenues were also usurped by the nobility must also finally be taken into account. Taxes which were not held legally, by a grant from the Crown, could be withheld illegally from royal officials. In 1452 John II addressed letters to the great noble families in which he painted a grim picture of the usurpations of royal revenues,

concerning which I called before me my chief financial officials who told me that in all the lands of the señoríos my officials are not allowed to collect any ms whatsoever and these sums ... are suspended each year in their accounts ...¹

The king was not overstating the case and later matters became even worse. Pedro de Acuña, for example, usurped all royal revenues in the Acuña lordships from 1463-1470.² In 1476 the Catholic sovereigns gave what amounted to a free pardon to the count of Medinaceli for all the royal revenues which he had usurped during the years 1464-1476.³

In effect, the lordships of the great nobility were often independent states within the state. In practice, if not in theory, there was only one administration within the /

1 An example of such a letter, sent to Pedro de Aguilar, A.D.M., Priego, leg.37, doc.4, 6 March 1452.

2 Ibid, Ad., leg.29, doc.4, 15 Oct.1470. This is a confirmation by Henry IV of the agreement whereby Acuña was to pay 400 enriqueas of gold for all these usurpations.

3 Carta de fin y quito, 20 May 1476, ibid, Med. leg.40, doc.61.

the señorío. It is not, therefore, really surprising to find the great nobility exempting their subjects from royal taxes - a power theoretically vested in the king only. The counts of Medinaceli, for example, could grant exemptions from alcabalas and even exempt one area from all taxes except those paid to the count himself.¹

What difference did these royal taxes make to the value of lordship in fifteenth century Castile? The fact that the purely seigneurial income (deriving from the juridical grant of lordship) was negligible has already been argued. A comparison between the income provided by alienated or usurped royal taxes and the income provided by seigneurial taxes will emphasise the point still further.

Data on the revenues of the king of Navarre (Table IX)² shows that 49.24% of his total income was provided from the royal alcabalas in his lordships. From the comments of royal officials it is quite clear that the king of Navarre collected the royal taxes in his lordships and held on to the proceeds in most cases, although he did not have a legal right to their enjoyment. A note for the lordship of Cuéllar, for example, states that Navarre had /

1 Ibid, leg.46, doc.48, 30 April 1470, exempts Somaén from all non seigneurial taxes; ibid, leg.40, doc.64, 1 Jan. 1490, exempts vecinos of Medinaceli from certain alcabalas; ibid, Cog., leg.11, doc.40, 7 Jan.1461, exempts merchants from alcabalas in Cogolludo on wednesdays.

2 Appendix I below pp.570-1

had 180,000 mrs p.a. from the alcabala revenues and that, although he had ordered 80,000 mrs p.a. to be paid to the royal tax farmer, nothing had in fact been paid. For the 70,000 mrs.p.a. which he collected from the tercias in the same lordship no sum was ever even theoretically paid to the royal tax farmer.¹

The income of the king of Navarre has been tabulated by lordships as well as by taxes. It is, therefore, possible to see at a glance the immense difference which these alienated or usurped royal taxes made to the value of a lordship. In the case of the king of Navarre the alcabalas and tercias alone provided by far the greatest part of the income derived from any one lordship - in the lordship of Medina del Campo 93%, Olmedo 82%, Cuéllar 78%, Penafiel 85%, Roa and Aranda 90%, Atienza 79%, the marquesado of Villena 78%. The same was true of other lordships. An approximate estimate indicates that about two thirds of the income of the house of Medinaceli, derived from lordships in the Medinaceli area, was provided by the alcabalas alone.²

The economic power of the nobility, however, did not reach its greatest extent with the conquest of royal taxation within /

1 The document itself is in L. Suárez Fernández, 'Las rentas castellanas del infante don Juan', Hisp., xix (1959), 192-204.

2 Accounts and farms of revenues with data for the years 1432-3, 1488, 1489-91 in A.D.M., Med., leg.40, doc.57 and leg.50, doc.7.

within the lordships. In many cases the nobility, by using political pressure at court, managed to take over the royal taxes and administration in some areas of crown lands. The full extent of this pressure did not become fully felt until after 1460, but before that date the nobility had already established a basis for action.

The state of affairs outlined above - the system of assignments, the alienation and usurpation of royal taxes in the lordship - helped to bring about this further extension of noble power over royal revenues. After all, where could new privileges be assigned once the royal taxes within a lordship were already lost to the Crown? Where could the 4,500,00 ms p.a. which the Catholic sovereigns granted to the count of Medinaceli be assigned after the lords of Medinaceli already had assignments of privileges on the royal taxes in their lordships? The only available resources were royal taxes outside the lordship. Thus, the 4,500,000 ms p.a. in question were assigned on royal taxes in Seville, Jerez, Atienza, and customs posts on the Aragonese frontier.¹

The real process of the disintegration of royal power /

¹ A.D.M., Med., leg.25, doc.8, 1 Oct.1492. Previous privileges assigned on royal taxes within the lordship: Ibid, leg.25, doc.6, 10 Nov.1467 and doc.7, 24 Jan.1478.

power in favour of the nobility came to a head about 1460. From 1460 onwards royal taxes were alienated on a massive scale. Moreover, not only were specific taxes alienated but the administration of them was alienated as well: not only did these alienations apply to seigneurial areas but they also applied to the crown lands. In 1466, for example, Alfonso XII made a free gift of all the revenues still owing to the Crown in Andalusia for the period 1452-65 to don Alvaro de Stúñiga and don Juan Pacheco.¹ The latter's political importance was further emphasised by another grant, in the following year, of 120,000 mrs p.a. assigned on the revenues of the servicio and montazgo.² Yet the political power balance had to be maintained. Accordingly, on the same day, the count of Benavente was granted the administration and taxes of the servicio and montazgo taxes at two important puertos of the sheep routes.³

This alienation of both the royal taxes and the administration was not an isolated case. In the following year, for example, a similar grant was made, with respect to tercias, in favour of the countess of Buendía.⁴

What /

1 R.A.H., 9-30-7, 6483, 20 July 1466.

2 Ibid., doc. dated 4 Dec. 1467.

3 Ibid., doc. dated 4 Dec. 1467. The puertos were Villaharta and La Perdiguera. The value of the grant can be gauged by the condition that it would revert to the Crown if Alfonso XII granted Pimentel 2,000 vassals and 2,000,000 mrs p.a.

4 A.D.M., Ad., leg. 29, doc. 3, 18 May 1468.

What did such a grant imply? One last detailed example will show how these royal revenues were gained by the nobility.

In 1467 Alfonso XII granted the customs duties or almojarifazgo of the bishopric of Córdoba to the powerful don Alfonso de Aguilar whose lordships lay to the south east of the town. The grant itself described the process whereby this particular revenue came to be totally alienated: indeed the chronic state of the customs duties was used to justify their total alienation to Aguilar. First of all the figures for the farm in 1467 were quoted. The gross total was 1,844,759 ms and 5 dineros. Of this total 1,250,804 ms and 6 dineros were already earmarked for the payment of annual privileges and tierra. Then the grant listed another 514,900 ms which had been alienated to Aguilar during the few months since the farm had been established. This left the Crown with a mere 79,054 ms and 9 dineros - that is, 4.7% of the farm total. Since these new payments had been added to the sums already held by Aguilar, and since the Crown was left with only a meagre income which would disappear when non-recurrent expenditure had to be paid, the grant alienated the whole revenue and its administration. Ironically the grant used the same sort of formulae as those in grants of lordship. In the first place the taxes and /

and administration were granted in perpetuity. Even more astonishing, Aguilar was given complete licence to sell, exchange, and gift the taxes and administration. This licence, unlike the usual grants of lordship, did not exclude the Church. Aguilar was to administer and collect the taxes as he wished - that is, either by farming them or by direct collection. The only limitation involved was that presumably he had to see to the payment of existing assignments. Since, in any case, Aguilar was probably the main beneficiary such a limitation was not a hindrance.¹ Moreover, it was categorically stated in the grant that all subsequent increases in the proceeds of the taxes, over and above the total of the 1467 farm, were to remain his.²

The great nobility, then, were remarkably successful in obtaining royal privileges, tierra, official salaries, and control of the local financial administration of the Crown. Lordships, which by themselves were of relatively little value, could be made extremely remunerative once the control of royal taxes was acquired by the nobility. So far, however, the discussion has centred on the great nobility. Did the lesser /

1 Aguilar income included large payments theoretically designed for frontier defence. As early as the 1390s the Aguilar family was cornering at least 30% of royal taxes in the bishoprics of Córdoba and Jaén: ibid, Priego, leg.38, docs.37 and 38.

2 The grant of the almojarifazgo and its administration, ibid, leg.39, doc.5, 5 May 1467.

nobility manage to obtain alternative sources of income?

3. The Lesser Nobility

Of all the groups in society the lesser nobility was one of the least static. It is true that a definition of those included in the lesser nobility appears a straightforward task. There were the younger sons of the great nobility - the segundones - who, because of the mayorazgos, were denied direct access to titles and wealth. Then there were the lesser rural nobles - the hidalgos, caballeros, and infanzones - who were scattered throughout the lands of the Crown, the Church, and the great lords. Finally the urban aristocracy may be considered as forming part of the lesser nobility. But such a definition must be qualified by noting the effects of social mobility. The younger sons of the great noble families could sink into the relative obscurity of the rural hidalguía. Alternatively, they often attained great social status and wealth by office in Church and state. At the other end of the scale the social frontiers were even vaguer. Sons and daughters of poverty stricken escuderos and hidalgos married into the peasantry and wealthy commoners became caballeros de cuantía. In this discussion the incidence of social mobility is taken into account. The urban aristocracy /

aristocracy, however, is discussed elsewhere,¹ although the connection between town and countryside is mentioned in order to round off the general picture.

Three general factors have to be examined in order to assess the economic position of the lesser nobility. These three factors are the geographical distribution of the nobility, the agrarian basis of their income, and the availability of alternative sources of income.

It has been calculated that in late fifteenth-century Spain there were some 55,000 nobles of whom 50,000 were members of the lesser nobility.² The geographical distribution of this lesser nobility had important effects.

There can be no doubt that the majority of the lesser nobility were densely concentrated in the north of the kingdom, especially in Guipúzcoa and the Basque provinces. It has already been noted that the Basque provinces claimed universal hidalguía.³ In practice, a non-noble class of peasantry existed in the Basque provinces at the beginning of the fifteenth century: the distinction between noble and non-noble depending on possession of land. The number of hidalgos, however, was very high and it was probably because of this very fact that the universal /

1 Below, pp. 354-96.

2 Vicens, Historia, ii, 417-8.

3 Above, p. 104.

universal claim of hidalguia came to be made. In an hermandad of 1394 the peasants or labradores of the Basque area were distinguished from the hidalgos. By the fuero of 1526, however, it was asserted that all the inhabitants of the Basque provinces were hidalgos.¹

To the south of these areas the geographical distribution of the lesser nobility conformed to the pattern of the reconquest.² The pattern of reconquest in the Duero valley in the ninth and tenth centuries had been one of small advances - slow advances, carried out on a small scale by groups of colonists. It was the work of individuals who later became hidalgos, or who, grouped together, formed the behetrías or villages inhabited by free men who possessed the privilege of choosing and changing their lord.

The next wave of reconquest crossed the Duero into Extremadura (Extrema Durii). With the conquest of Toledo in 1085, a sudden advance was made possible toward the valley of the Tagus. This time the problems of reconquest and repopulation were largely undertaken by the towns who assured themselves of a sturdy political and juridical position based on fueros. In this area there were no behetrías. The hidalgos who lived in the areas controlled /

1 See generally García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.297-322.

2 For what follows see generally Vicens, Historia, ii. chap.1 and especially C. Sánchez Albornoz, 'The frontier and Castilian liberties', in The New World looks at its history, ed. A.R. Lewis and T.F. McGann (Texas, 1963), pp.25-46.

controlled by the towns were not as numerous as in the north. Nowhere else in Europe was there

such a density of powerful free rural councils possessing such an important influence in the political equilibrium of the state. Nowhere else do we find such a network of municipalities under royal patronage, a network so dense that it hardly leaves room for the appearance of feudal holdings.¹

The last stage of the reconquest which is relevant to this study took place in the thirteenth century. Within the space of fifty years the kingdom of Castile doubled its territory by pushing south from the Tagus right down to the mountains round Granada. This massive annexation of territory could not be consolidated easily. Thus, whereas the Aragonese Crown supervised the problems of colonisation in Mallorca and Valencia right down to the smallest details, the Castilian Crown was forced to delegate this task to the military orders, the Church, the nobility, and one or two great towns. Hence the large areas of land dominated by the military orders, the town of Seville, and the southern nobility. The town of Seville, for example, was assigned a jurisdiction which in itself was larger than the kingdom of Valencia annexed by Jaime I. The same was true for the nobility: south of the Tagus the nobility were few in numbers and possessed large areas of territory. Here in the south there were few hidalgos.

In /

1 Ibid, p.42.

In short, the numbers of lesser nobility decreased from the north to the south of the kingdom. Naturally this general structure became modified through time. The political power of the towns and the behetrías declined at the same time as the power of the great nobility increased. Yet the basic geographical distribution of the lower nobility remained the same. In the sixteenth century royal financial officials still based calculations of demographic figures on this decrease in the numbers of hidalgos from north to south.¹

It has already been argued that the purely seigneurial income of the great nobility during this period was insufficient to maintain proper standards. The same was true of the fifteenth century rural hidalguía - indeed their situation was worse. The rural hidalgo was poverty stricken if his only basis of income was made up of seigneurial dues and agrarian rents.

A factor of crucial importance was, of course, the size of the estates of the lower nobility. There were, inevitably, great variations as far as this was concerned. This was particularly true of the younger sons of the great nobility. Provision for younger sons obviously depended /

¹ See, for example, the Relación de los vecinos pecheros... y de los hidalgos que se presupone podrá haber en cada una de las dichas provincias in Codoin, xiii (1848), 521-30. The officials calculated that there were as many hidalgos as vecinos pecheros in the kingdom of Leon whereas in the province of Seville their estimate was 6,181 hidalgos as against 74,166 vecinos pecheros.

depended on the power and wealth of the family and also on the number of children. The segundones who inherited substantial lands despite the mayorazgo system often acquired titles and sufficient prestige to enable them to remain within the ranks of the greater nobility. The admiral don Fadrique Enríquez, for example, managed to make substantial provision for all his four sons. Thus, although the fourth son with only one small lordship and an annuity of 20,000 mrs on royal revenues was clearly a very poor relation to the eldest son who inherited the chief mayorazgo, he was, nevertheless, equally clearly a cut above the general hidalgua.¹ Similarly, the second son of Pero Manrique was given the lordship of Paredes by his father and was later given the title of count of Paredes by John II.²

Yet while noting, and even emphasising, these exceptions, it nevertheless remains true that the land controlled by the great mass of the hidalgua was small. The hidalgo or caballero usually had a very limited lordship over one place, or a castle with three or four villages.³ /

1 The second son was given a mayorazgo of sizeable lordships, 120,000 mrs p.a. assigned on the soap industry, and 80,000 mrs p.a. assigned on royal taxes in Andalusia. The third son inherited minor lordships, 15 of the 95 lances held from the Crown, and 30,000 mrs p.a. on royal taxes. See Condesa de Yebes, 'Testamentos de doña Marina de Ayala y de don Fadrique Enríquez', B.R.A.H., cxxiii (1948), 561-85.

2 Claros Varones, pp.90-1.

3 Vicens, Historia, ii. 139.

villages. In the north these lordships were even smaller. One of the fundamental characteristics attributed to the Basque nobility is that their lands were even smaller than the lands of the rural hidalgos of Castile.¹ The same pattern prevailed in Guipúzcoa, Asturias, and to a lesser degree in León. In these northern areas generally, the hidalgo usually had a fortified house with an adjoining stretch of land barely sufficient for subsistence. At a time of rapid price rise it was inevitable that this lesser nobility would suffer. Direct evidence for a decline of income does not exist, yet the circumstantial evidence pointing to a decline in the fortunes of the lesser nobility is formidable.

Part of this evidence relates to the relationship between the hidalguía and more powerful sectors of society. The great nobility maintained their position against the Crown but the lesser nobility had to defend themselves against the great lords, the monasteries, and town councils. For obvious reasons the establishment or existence of a tax exempt hidalguía on the ecclesiastical, noble, and municipal lordships was not regarded favourably. Every attempt was consequently made to prevent such /

¹ García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.314.

such a situation.

In the first place there was an attempt to prevent the entry and settlement of the lesser nobility into the areas in question. The very first of the ordinances of Riaza of 1457 dealt with this point:-

We establish and order that no caballero, escudero, powerful man, exempt or privileged individual, or any of their dependents ... can be an inhabitant of this town of Riaza or its lands since this would be and is of great harm to this town and its lands.¹

Secondly, there was an attempt to prevent inter-marriage between taxable pecheros and tax exempt hidalgos. The example of Riaza could be used again but, instead, I shall quote an example concerning the monastery of San Salvador de Oña. In 1476 the abbot wrote to various areas belonging to the monastery:-

... inasmuch as I have been informed by responsible and credible persons that some natives and inhabitants of these areas, contrary to the privileges of this monastery and the ordinances of the abbots and against my will, have married some of their daughters to omes fijosdalgos ... and since this would cause great problems and scandals ... I order that no one marry his daughter to an hidalgo on pain of a fine of 10,000 mrs ... Furthermore no hidalgo can live in or inhabit any of these areas ...²

Lastly, there was an attempt to prevent the lesser nobility from buying up land from the pecheros, since land bought /

1 Col. Dip. Riaza, p.141.

2 A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg.1284, doc. of 16 Sept.1476.

bought in this way ceased to provide taxable wealth. Consequently great care was always taken with leases of land to the peasantry. These leases always stipulated that the beneficiary could not alienate or sell the land to members of the lesser nobility. Thus, when the monastery of Sahagún leased a vineyard in perpetuity to a pechero in 1434 it was:-

on condition that you cannot sell or alienate or pass it on to an escudero poderoso, dueña, monastery or church, but only to a labrador llano.¹⁴

This preoccupation with the possible loss of taxable land could go even further. In the Medinaceli lands no hidalgo or caballero could buy land from a pechero unless the payment of taxes was also assumed. Naturally it was recognised that much land had already passed into the control of caballeros and hidalgos. Consequently registers were ordered to be drawn up listing lands which had changed hands in this way. The problem was further complicated by the fact that caballeros and hidalgos leased their land to the peasantry who thus had the direct usufruct if not the actual sovereignty over the land. The ducal ordinances, therefore, laid down that these peasants either had to return all such lands to the direct exploitation of /

1 Ibid., Pergs., carp.943, doc.3, 25 Jan.1434. Most leases, like this one to a vecino of Perroso, included this provision.

of the hidalgos and caballeros, or else pay taxes as if they were the nominal owners of the land. Furthermore, taxes collected in this way were to have precedence over the rents owed by the peasantry to the caballero or hidalgo.¹

Some of these measures directed against the lesser nobility date back to the fourteenth century and they do not by themselves constitute clear evidence of a decline in the fortunes of the hidalgos and caballeros. Yet it must not be forgotten that the great nobility tended to increase pressure on the lower nobility whose seigneurial income was also declining. It is not, therefore, surprising to find evidence of a decline in social status. Perhaps the best way to illustrate the point is to give an example of an individual hidalgo at the moment of being depressed into the ranks of the peasantry.

In 1470 the abbot of San Salvador de Ona drew up some ordinances. These ordinances contained the usual anti-hidalgo measures - prohibition of marriage with the hidalguía, prohibition of the sale of any land to the hidalguía, and the prohibition of the entry of any of the lesser nobility into the areas of the monastery except on surrender of hidalgo status. The ordinances then ended /

¹ A.D.M., Med., leg.40, doc.35, ordinances of 1504 which make it clear that a fifteenth century precedent is being repeated.

ended with the following declaration:

Furthermore the said abbot ordered that Juan Alfonso de Valdivielso, although he is an hidalgo, should nevertheless pay two thirds of the pedido assessment whenever a royal pedido has to be collected; such payment not being in derogation of his hidalguia but for the common good and peace of the inhabitants. To this Juan Alfonso agreed but stated that he should now be allowed to buy or sell land in the area like the other inhabitants on condition that he should still not be allowed to marry off his children in the said area ...¹

Exemption from payment of the royal pedido was one of the most cherished privileges of the nobility. Indeed this very exemption was often taken as a proof of nobility. Clearly, therefore, this hidalgo lost one of the most essential marks of the nobleman. Furthermore, it is hard to envisage any taxes from which he would now be exempt since his ability to deal in land made him liable to the payment of the corresponding dues to the monastery. Although still managing to retain the label of an hidalgo, this individual was well on the way to becoming a non-noble pechero.

How widespread was this depression of the lower nobility? For those whose income was confined to their lands the depression was inevitable. Other examples show that /

¹ A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg.1284, ordenanzas de Cillaperlata e otros lugares, 14 June 1470.

that this depression was not confined to one hidalgo on the lands of the monastery of Oña. In the late fourteenth century hidalgos on lands belonging to the monastery of Santo Toribio could haughtily reject all claims made by the prior and maintain that their only obligation was one of military service. By the mid-fifteenth century, however, the position of the hidalgos had changed. No longer did they control all the localities. In 1443, for example, Count Pedro de Stúñiga drew up some very revealing ordinances for the area round Curiel. The supposedly privileged hidalgos had to pay a whole series of taxes and services which were listed in detail. Moreover, they had no favoured position as far as the local governing oligarchy was concerned. Indeed, one of the hidalgos' most bitter complaints was that they had to pay taxes which were imposed by an officialdom from which they were excluded. Once more it is clear that this rural hidalguía had lost the all important privilege of exemption from taxation. Their lands were probably no larger than those of their non-noble neighbours. Indeed, so depressed was this rural nobility that the count even decreed that everybody was free to buy or sell land - there was now no danger since everyone paid taxes.¹

1t /

1 For these examples see N. Porro, 'Tres documentos sobre fijosdalgo castellanos', C.H.E., xxxiii-xxxiv (1961), 355-66.

It is now time to turn and discuss the outlets which could enable some of the lesser nobility to ameliorate an increasingly precarious economic existence. The most striking reaction to this decline took the form of banditry and brigandage. This generalization needs elaboration since the evidence for it has lent itself to other explanations.

One of the permanent features of the history of the kingdom of Castile in the fifteenth century was the state of total anarchy which prevailed in the north, from Galicia to the Basque provinces. Historians, on the whole, have tended to ignore these areas and, when they have been studied, there has been a tendency to make the anarchy intelligible in terms of political history. Thus, Basque history in the fifteenth century is seen largely in terms of a bitter struggle between the rival bands of the 'onacinos' and the 'gamboinos'. No convincing explanation has yet been put forward of why the struggle took place, who formed the bands, or indeed what the course of events was. One explanation sees the roots of the anarchy in a quarrel over procedure at a traditional ceremony. Another explanation is that the Basque's character includes a desire to dominate rather than to be equal or inferior: moreover honour demanded vengeance for any slight and, once a quarrel started, the Basque spirit of vendetta gave it /

it a law of perpetual motion.¹

The real explanation for the permanent state of anarchy in the north does not rest on political factors. There is no evidence of a constitutional struggle, political programmes, or even any cohesive political groupings. The events were exactly what they appeared to be - acts of banditry and brigandage. They were the result of the increased precariousness of the nobility's economic position, the fact that the north was the area most densely populated by the lesser nobility, and the equally important fact that the least productive and sterile land of the kingdom lay in the north. This explanation is made even more likely when it is realized that the anarchy was, on the whole, a rural phenomena and that the culprits were the rural nobility. The Basque towns, for example, remained outside the sphere of operations as did those of the rural nobility who migrated to the towns.²

Brigandage /

1 For the Basque provinces see García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.316-7 which briefly recaps the various explanations. There is no good study for Galicia although the anarchy is grimly depicted in S. Portela Pazos, Galicia en tiempo de los Fonseca (Madrid, 1957).

2 In the Basque provinces the situation was aggravated by the clan system prevailing among the nobility. The parientes mayores, relying on the support of the parientes menores, used the jauregui or fortified house as the centre of operations. From the basque point of view the division of the parientes into mayores and menores corresponded to a division into greater and lesser nobility although it is clear that the mayores were the approximate equivalent of the Castilian rural hidalguía. García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.315, 317.

Brigandage and banditry were not confined to the extreme north. Immediately to the south there lay the areas of the behetrías which, by the fifteenth century, had fallen to the great nobility. Consequently one point that has puzzled historians is why John II, in 1454, should have made an attempt which seemed to aim at eradicating the nobility from the areas of behetrías. In fact the measures were specifically directed against the lesser nobility, not against the great nobility, and one of the reasons given was the desire to end the permanent state of 'bands, anarchy, brawls, disagreements, and struggles'.¹

Nevertheless, it seems true to say that to the south brigandage shaded into meaningful military service for the achievement of the political aims of the various factions in Castile. There can be no doubt that war provided an outlet for some of the impoverished lesser nobility. The situation was strikingly described in a memorandum drawn up in 1471 by a bishop and addressed to Henry IV. After indicating the state of civil war and anarchy all over the kingdom, the memorandum continued:-

and seeing men of a few lances rise up in these turbulences and, by dint of stealing and theft, reach a stage where they have one hundred or two hundred lances which they maintain by the sweat of the poor ... as was done in France during the time of her great misfortunes.²

The /

¹ Escorial, Z.11.6., fos.119b-121a, 22 April 1454. The measures were clearly directed against the lesser nobility. Moreover the cortes had requested such a measure and taxation had been disrupted: C.D.R.A.H., 19 (viii, 1447).

² Ibid, 657-9 (cl^{xxxix}, 1471).

The comparison with France was apt as the career of a Rodrigo de Villandrando illustrates. For Pulgar this was obviously a case of a poverty stricken hidalgo who gained fame, wealth, and titles by his military career as a mercenary in the civil wars of France and Castile.¹ If all the nobility did not practice their functional military role, there still remained many professionals. Indeed Pulgar sets aside a special section of his work in order to describe the activities of these caballeros fijosdalgo who made war their profession.² Often such men offered their services to the great nobility. Here there were great variations. At one end of the scale such services were simply arranged on the basis of the great lord affording security and protection. Alfonso de Guzmán, for example, afforded protection in his port of Lepe to Juan Pérez de la Barrera and his pirates.³ But more common were the caballeros and escuderos who served in the households and administrations of the great nobility. On the Medinaceli lands, for example, there were several alcaldes (castellans) who held acostamientos (livery and maintenance) from the duke and were described as caballeros y escuderos de tierra de casa de su señoría.⁴

Many /

1 Claros Varones, pp.62-71.

2 Ibid., pp.96-107.

3 A.M.S., caja 1414-15, no.78.

4 A.D.M., Med., leg.50, doc.7, 9 Jan.1489.

Many of the lesser nobility also received payments of tierra for one or more lances.¹

Church and state also provided obvious outlets for some members of the nobility. Enough has been said about the usurpation of royal taxes. The Church also had to face encroachments and usurpations by the lesser nobility. By the fifteenth century, however, this phenomenon was on the whole restricted to the north. In the Basque provinces the nobility virtually controlled all the churches and monasteries as lay patrons. In Galicia, whole bishoprics fell to the nobility.² Two general points only should be noted about this situation at this stage. In the first place, ecclesiastical wealth was the object of attention precisely because of the economic hardships of the nobility. Secondly, this nobility was, in Castilian terms, a lesser nobility.

Further south the situation was different and conformed more to the general European pattern. For, instead of a crude attempt at encroachment, the Church was used as a means for providing careers for the lesser nobility and, more especially, for the younger sons of the great nobility. Thus ecclesiastical positions, regarded with disdain in the extreme north, were coveted in the rest of the kingdom.

A /

1 Examples in the accounts of the Córdoba region in ibid., Priego, leg.38, docs.37 and 38.

2 See below, p.283

A career in the Church or state often prevented the segundones from a decline into obscurity. The key middle posts - archdeaconries and encomiendas in the military orders - tended to be the preserve of the segundones¹. Pero Manrique's second son, Rodrigo Manrique, for example, started his career as a comendador in the order of Santiago.² Don Juan Manrique, the fifth of Pero Manrique's fifteen children, was pushed into a career in the Church which would provide him with a respectable status and income. After some time spent in the households of the bishop of Burgos and the archbishop of Seville, he was made a canon of Burgos cathedral in 1450. Five years later he was given the important post of archdeacon of Valpuesta. Subsequently John II made him an honorific member of his royal council and he was also made an apostolic pronotario.³

Similar /

1 The nobility, of course, could also exercise important lay offices without actually becoming ecclesiastics. Pedro Fernández de Frías and Diego Ruiz de Frías, for example, held the important offices of mayordomo and merino of the monastery of Las Huelgas in the early fifteenth century: L. Huidobro y Serna, 'Apuntes para la historia de Burgos: la noble familia de los Frías', B.R.A.H., cxxiii (1948), 547-60.

2 Claros Varones, pp.90-1. Many of the younger sons of the great nobility were comendadores. See, for example, A.D.M., Feria, leg.55, doc.22, 8 Oct.1409, where, apart from Lorenzo Suarez de Figueroa, master of Santiago, two other Figueras are listed as comendador of Montiel and comendador mayor of León.

3 A. Blanco Díez, 'Dignatarios eclesiásticos burgaleses. Los arcedianos de Valpuesta', B.R.A.H., cxxi (1947), 443-87. The two previous archdeacons of Valpuesta were segundones of the Velasco family.

Similar examples could be given with respect to careers in the royal administration. Yet royal administrative posts were, on the whole, regarded as being below the dignity of the knightly class. It is true that this did not apply to all posts in the royal administration. Honorific posts, such as chief butler, and posts which were partially honorific and partially military, such as adelantados, were the preserve of the great nobility and the segundones. Other more bureaucratic posts in the civil service, however, were regarded as being degrading. Indeed Pulgar even hints that these administrative jobs were more suited to some of the northern nobility. As far as Pulgar was concerned, the hidalguía of Guipúzcoa could not be compared with that of Castile. The northern hidalgo either dragged out a miserable existence in his own region or he moved south. When he did move south he was not to be found acquiring the knightly virtues of combat in the household of the constable - instead, he could be found learning to read and write in the households of the king's secretaries or in the household of a merchant.¹

During the fifteenth century some of the lesser nobility drifted into the towns. This did not always imply that the hidalgo sold his lands. At the same time, however /

¹ F. Cantera Burgos, 'Fernando de Pulgar y los conversos', Sef., iv (1944), 298-9.

however, there were prominent townsmen who were willing to buy up land - men described as 'honourable men' (ombres onrados) and 'gentle men' (gentiles hombres). Thus there were two contrary movements the extent of which cannot yet be accurately gauged. In some cases this nobility may have succeeded in joining the highest social ranks of the town and fused with the urban aristocracy. It is worth pointing out, however, that not all the towns received the lesser nobility readily and it is probable that some of them lost their status as nobles. Accounts for Seville for the years 1449-1450, for example, contain evidence of nobles who were utterly destitute. Escuderos of the barrios or districts of Santa Marina and San Vicente, for example, are listed, along with others such as fishermen or 'workers', as being poor and having no possessions or wealth. They, like Lazarillo's escudero a century later, lived among non-noble townsmen who were at least wealthy enough to be taxed.¹

Thus, despite the outlets, the fifteenth century probably /

¹ A.M.S., caja 1449-50, bundle of accounts of the quiebras in the various barrios of Seville. The situation with respect to noble exemption from taxation in Seville varied during the century. At this point the nobility were being assessed, along with the rest of the population, for the pedido. Most of those listed in the quiebras are described as 'pobres' but occasionally an occupation or social indication, such as 'escudero', 'pescador', or 'trabajador', is also given.

probably saw a decline in the social and economic fortunes of the lesser nobility. It is true that some of the younger sons of the great nobility escaped the worst consequences of the mayorazgo system. But what about their sons and the great mass of the escuderos, hidalgos, and caballeros? Undoubtedly the political crisis was aggravated by the needs of a declining sector of society anxious to recoup its fortunes by traditional military means.

4. Changing values: the quality of noble life

The traditional ideals and values of the nobility are portrayed in the biographies which were such an important element of fifteenth century historiography. Among these biographers Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Fernando del Pulgar were admirably objective. Yet this 'objectivity' was a relative one measured in terms of a set of conventions and ideas about society which coloured everything they wrote. They, and to a greater extent the other biographers, praised or denigrated individuals according to criteria which, though not always explicitly stated, were nevertheless real. An examination of these criteria and values reveals much about the quality of life of the nobility.¹

The /

¹ For much of what follows see J. Romero, 'Sobre la biografía española del siglo xv', C.H.E., 1-11 (1944), 115-38.

The fundamental idea that prevails in the biographies is that the quality of an individual depends on his lineage. When Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Fernando del Pulgar present an individual to the reader, one of the first points they examine is his lineage. Unless an individual belonged to the first or second estate it is clear that these biographers would not consider him as worthy of study. The exceptions to this rule are highly interesting. New men of doubtful or base lineage entered the first and second estate and were too important to be omitted from the gallery of claros varones. In such cases the biographers went to considerable lengths to clear up the doubts over lineage or to use these doubts as a form of condemnation. Thus Fernán Alfonso de Robles is condemned by his base origins as well as by his conduct.¹ Pablo de Santa María, bishop of Burgos, on the other hand, may have been a converso but he was 'of great lineage among that people'.² The most interesting example is the biography of Miguel Lucas de Iranzo. In this case royal favour raised a man of base origins to the highest social status. His biographer, however, begins his story with the ennoblement of Lucas de Iranzo and completely disregards his previous existence.³ Thus despite the important /

1 Generaciones, pp.105-8.

2 Ibid., p.89: 'fue ebreo, de grant linaje de aquella nación'.

3 Romero, ubi supra, p.120.

important changes in society - for example, the growth of towns - the third estate of the labradores did not merit attention.

The characteristics which the biographers praise and condemn in individual noblemen reveal the qualities needed by the perfect noble.¹ The noble should have a considerable amount of physical strength. Courage, essential in any good noble, can, however, make up for a lack of strength. It is because the good noble has courage, a sense of honour and no fear of death, that he is able to stand his ground in battle at a time when the villanos have taken to flight.² Fighting is the nobleman's profession and because of this he must devote his time to acquiring military skills. The profession of a noble, however, is not merely a matter of technical skills. The good noble should have a clear concept of life's scale of values. In the words of Díez de Games,

victory in battle is the greatest glory in this world ... it is the greatest good and the greatest glory of this life.

Military virtues are, therefore, vital for the good noble. There are other qualities, however, which are also very /

1 These qualities are specifically discussed in El Victorial, chaps. viii and xxx-xxxii and are referred to throughout the Generaciones and Claros Varones.

2 El Victorial, p.41.

3 Ibid, p.201. This is Díez de Games' conclusion after reviewing other views of 'el mayor bien'.

very important. The noble should have a firm faith in God, hate avarice, be loyal to kings, vassals and friends, and keep his distance from evil men and women of easy virtue. A good noble should always measure his words and give wise advice but learning, according to Díez de Games, is not important:

He who has to learn and use the arts of cavallería, should not spend much time in a school of letters.¹

The old ideals and qualities of the nobility undoubtedly survived in the fifteenth century. Indeed these were the very ideals and qualities which flourished on the frontier with the kingdom of Granada. Frontier life produced the verses and songs of the romances fronterizos which celebrated the deeds of valour whose heroes were individual nobles and the alcaldes of the frontier castles.² The adelantado Diego de Ribera, killed /

1 Ibid, p.64. Chaps.xix-xxi, generally, contain advice on the buenas maneras and costumbres which a noble should acquire.

2 There is no good study on the frontier. In general, and for the following points see: L. Suárez Fernández, Juan II y la frontera de Granada (Valladolid, 1954) which is corrected on some points by M. Arribas Palau, Las Treguas entre Castilla y Granada (Tangier, 1956); J. de M. Carriazo, 'Cartas de la frontera', Al-And., xi (1946), 69-130; the same, 'Relaciones fronterizas', R.A.B.M., lxi (1955), 23-51; J. Torres Fontes, 'La intronización Granadina', Al-And., xxvii (1962), 105-54; the same, Xiquena, castillo de la frontera (Murcia, 1960); R. Menéndez Pidal, Flor nueva de romances viejos (22nd ed., Madrid, 1968).

killed at the seige of Alora, became the tragic hero of Alora, la bien cercada. The crushing defeat inflicted on the Moors at the battle of Alporchones, in 1452, was celebrated in Allá en Granada la rica. Fajardo el Bravo, alcaide of Lorca, victor of Alporchones, and a legend in his own lifetime, is portrayed playing a deadly game of chess with the king of Granada in Jugando estaba el rey moro. Descriptions in prose of frontier life, such as those in the biography of Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, only serve to emphasise the fact that the traditional ideals and qualities of noble life still survived. Moreover, such traditions were not confined to the frontier. Díez de Games' El Victorial epitomises the ideals of chivalry and exalts them by describing the activities of Pedro Niño in places as far apart as England and the Mediterranean.

The traditional ideals of noble life, however, had to be adapted to political and social realities. Above all the growth of royal power and the attraction of the royal court affected the quality of life of the great nobility. The court advocated a policy of royal absolutism and, in such a setting, men like Alvaro de Luna appeared, first and foremost, as supporters of royal power.¹ The king could confer high social status and grant mercedes of /

¹ For the policy of royal absolutism see below §§ 469-77

of immense value. Despite the great displeasure of men like Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, the monarchy could elevate Fernán Alfonso de Robles to a position which even the great nobility respected. Indeed Fernando del Pulgar finally recognised this situation when he reluctantly agreed that the prince can change the 'constituciones de la cauallería' in order to adapt them to the new order of things.¹

The court, however, was not merely a centre of political power or the distribution centre of eagerly sought mercedes. Despite the fact that the king was perpetually on the move, the court had cultural pretensions. It is true that much attention was devoted to the traditional pastimes. John II went to considerable lengths to ensure his supply of falcons from Murcia and Henry IV was devoted to hunting.² But it was also a period when the court and manners were becoming increasingly refined. Theoretically, military prowess could be exhibited as much in the tournaments at court as on the frontier. Elaborate tournaments now formed part of the pageantry which, as in the rest of Europe, was the essential court setting for great marriages and /

¹ Claros Varones, pp.42-3.

² See, for example, J. Torres Fontes, El halconero y los halcones de Juan II de Castilla (Murcia, 1961), pp.12-16.

and diplomatic occasions.¹ Moreover this was also a period when an interest in the classical world and in the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, became increasingly influential on court literature.² Francisco Imperial, for example, used the whole arsenal of Dante to endow John II with all the sublime virtues and portray him as a perfect figure on whom the Gods had showered their gifts.³

In many cases the works of court literature were, no doubt, the result of 'badly assimilated erudition'.⁴ But the essential point is that the tone of the court influenced the style of life of many of the great nobility. The old values had to give way, to a certain extent, to new ones and this was exemplified by these Janus-faced nobles. Of these, Íñigo López de Mendoza, marquis of Santillana, stands out from the rest. He fought on the frontier and in the civil wars but he was also an avid collector of literary works, personally encouraged translations of Plato, Vergil, Ovid and Seneca, and read widely in Italian, French /

1 See Hay, op.cit., p.70 and E. Benito Ruano, Los infantes de Aragón (Madrid, 1952), pp.41-9 which is a convenient summary of the chroniclers' descriptions of the chivalric element in court life.

2 See the detailed study by M. Menéndez y Pelayo, Poetas de la corte de Juan II (Madrid, Austral, 1959) and more recent general surveys such as J. García López, Historia de la literatura española (9th ed., Barcelona, 1965) and M. de Riquer, 'La culture au bas moyen âge', J.W.H., vi (1961), 771-86.

3 J. Gimeno Casaldueiro, 'Fuentes y significado del "Decir al nacimiento de Juan II" de Francisco Imperial', Rev. Lit. Comp., xxxviii (1964), 115-20.

4 García López, op.cit., p.89.

French and Catalan. Moreover, if Petrarch inspired Santillana's sonnets, 'fechos al itálico modo', the serranillas derived their inspiration from Provence and depicted the encounters of sweet maidens with chivalrous and elegant knights in a pastoral setting of spring landscapes. Don Enrique de Villena, master of Calatrava, although not as outstanding as Santillana, provides an example of a curious mixture of magical nonsense and learning. Here was a noble who translated the Aeneid into Castilian and yet dabbled in sorcery to such an extent that, on his death, the king ordered much of his library to be destroyed.¹

Santillana and Enrique de Villena were not, of course, typical representatives of the great nobility. Yet, if we return once more to the biographers, it is possible to discern a new emphasis in the values of the good noble Díez de Games, as we have seen, bluntly dismissed 'learning' as being of little use to the noble. The same is not true of Fernán Pérez de Guzmán and Fernando del Pulgar. The count of Haro, for example, is not only praised by Pulgar for possessing all the traditional virtues but also because 'he learned to read Latin and devoted time to studying chronicles and the past'.² Moreover, Santillana emerges as /

1 Ibid, pp.94-8, 118; Riquer, ubi supra, pp.782-3.

2 Claros Varones, p.33.

as the ideal model of the noble. All the traditional virtues are stressed. His victories in battle and his military skill are described. So too is his generosity and complete disdain for financial matters. Yet the new values are stressed as much as the traditional ones. He is depicted as serving the king, who, recognising his virtues, makes him marquis of Santillana and count of El Real de Manzanares. But, above all, his learning is stressed as much as his military qualities. Despite some excusable sins of the flesh, Santilla is the perfect noble and prototype of the courtier because he combines learning with military success.¹ The combination is important for the biographer. Men of learning who are not nobles, for example Juan de Mena, find no place in the works of Pérez de Guzmán and Pulgar. But, equally, those nobles who add learning to the traditional military virtues are accorded greater praise.

Finally, is it an accident that the decline in the value of señoríos or lordships and the increased interest by the nobility in the court and its wealth is accompanied by a similar change in the emphasis of noble values and literature? 'The 14th century', writes Tate,

was the aristocratic century par excellence. Its legends and its literature, the deeds of Laras or the Castros, the Rimado de palacio or /

1 Ibid., pp.36-47.

or the Mocedades de Rodrigo and the innumerable anecdotes of the Crónica de 1344 revolve around the independence of the nearly self-sufficient señorío.¹

This aristocratic literature based on the 'self-sufficient señorío' disappears in the fifteenth century. Tate quite rightly stresses the rise of political and literary propaganda which aimed at stressing the divine nature of the king.² But it is also true that the rebel nobility focussed their attention on the court.³ Here the example of Jorge Manrique's famous Coplas por la muerte de su padre is interesting. The Manriques supported the rebels against the monarchy. The poem itself belongs to the traditional 'ubi sunt?' theme in Castilian literature.⁴ But what examples does Manrique use to evoke his wistfulness of remembrance? On the one hand, reflecting the acquisition of 'learning' by the nobility, he summons up the heroes of the classical world. But they are preceded by the court. The only contemporaries cited by Manrique are those who were intimately connected with the court - John II, Henry IV, Alfonso /

1 R.B. Tate, 'An apology for monarchy', Rom.Phil., xv (1961), 122.

2 Ibid., pp.111-23.

3 The nobility wished to control the court and not diminish its influence. See below pp.483-93

4 The theme stresses the vanity and frailty of all earthly endeavour and the sentiments expressed by Manrique are similar to those of Villon in his Ballade des dames du temps jadis.

Alfonso XII, the infantes of Aragon and Alvaro de Luna. Moreover, Manrique evokes, above all, the atmosphere and world of the court - the tournaments, jousts, women, dresses, music, dances, and mercedes. The señorío has disappeared and has been replaced by the court.¹ This is surely no accident. The vast documentation on the Medinaceli family includes one large and complete legajo of accounts dealing with señorío income for the period 1367-92.² The legajos of fifteenth century documentation, on the other hand, contain little on señorío income and a great deal on the royal mercedes which were dispensed at court.

1 As far as I know this point remains unstressed although from the point of view of literature rather than history, there may be other explanations for the change of emphasis.
 2 A.D.M., Med., leg.82, passim.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AND THE MILITARY ORDERS

THE CHURCH

1. The Estate of the Church: Terminology, Privileges, Geography

The Church in Castile was an integral part of the western Church. Consequently, as far as juridical aspects are concerned, there is little that needs to be discussed in detail. Variations in terminology from the general European pattern were few and not really significant. Thus, for example, in the Basque provinces the word monasterio was generally used of churches.¹ Similarly the dignitaries of the ecclesiastical hierarchy bore the same names and performed the same functions. The exception here was the arcipreste or archpriest. In Castile the archpriest seems to have retained substantial power and was not necessarily the agent of the archdeacon as in France.²

The criteria relating to entry into the first estate was also the same as in the rest of Europe. The special /

1 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.282, 310-11.

2 Royal and ecclesiastical letters often single out archpriests and vicars general from the general body of ecclesiastical judges. See, for example, the letter of Henry III to the chapter of Toledo, 14 March 1404, and the letter of the archbishop of Toledo to the archpriest of La Guardia, 14 July 1431, in B.N., M.S., 13018, fos.141R-143V, 223R-224R and the data on tithe disputes in the farms of 1412-13 in A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.95.

special juridical position of the military orders, however, needs to be stressed. The members of the military orders were juridically monks and, from the twelfth century onwards, they were theoretically governed by the same rules as the monks of the orders to which they belonged. As late as 1459 Pius II confirmed the jurisdiction of Morimond over the Cistercian military orders, and the abbot of Cîteaux entitled himself 'Supreme Master of the Orders of Calatrava, Alcántara, Montesa and Christ'.¹ Juridically, therefore, the paramonastic warriors of the military orders were monks. In practice their military functions, their ability to marry, and their invariable noble status, served to differentiate them sharply from the other monastic orders.²

The privileges of the clergy were also, on the whole, the same as in the rest of western Europe. Church courts and benefit of clergy meant a large measure of protection from the secular courts. This protection, along with the seigniorial jurisdiction wielded by the Church on its own lands, gave rise to the usual conflicts with royal justice. The Church was accused of interfering /

1 Maur Cocheril, 'L'implantation des abbayes cisterciennes', *A.E.M.*, i (1964), 242-4.

2 The variation between theory and practice hardly needs stressing. See, for example, Alfonso XII's letter ordering officials to desist from the embargo on an encomienda belonging to the wife of a comendador: *C.D.R.A.H.*, 519 (cxxxii, 20 Feb. 1466).

interfering with royal justice, protecting malefactors with excommunications, and abusing benefit of clergy. Royal laws tried to clarify and settle the problems.¹

At first sight, the exemption from taxation which the Castilian clergy enjoyed might seem even greater than that enjoyed by the nobility. Theoretically this may have been the case, although the exemption was not a total one. John II clearly laid down the extent of the privilege. The clergy were exempt from all royal taxes except the alcabala which they had to pay in certain circumstances. They were not exempt, however, from municipal taxation which was destined for such projects in the common interest as bridgeworks and repairs to town walls.² The fiscal privileges of the clergy, like the judicial privileges, also led to frequent complaints and friction. The main burden of the complaints centred on the interference of ecclesiastical courts in fiscal matters and on the attempts by the clergy to exempt their lay dependents (paniaguados) from royal taxes.³ Other complaints, less often voiced, argued that the clergy should contribute to the crusade against /

1 See O.R., Lib.i, tit.iii, leyes vi-viii, xi-xv; ibid, tit.vii, leyes i,ii; ibid, Lib.ii, tit.i, ley v; ibid, Lib.iii, tit.i, leyes ii-iv,vii,viii,x. A useful summary of complaints from both sides in C.D.R.A.H., 370-3 (cix, 1465).

2 O.R., Lib.i, tit.iii, leyes i and xiii; ibid, Lib.iv, tit.iv, leyes xix,xxxiii.

3 See, for example, Cortes, iii,650-1 (3,1453) and J.Palanco Romero, Estudios del reinado de Enrique IV (Granada,1914), pp.66-7. The conditions of tax farms tried to vitiate the powers of the vicars general in fiscal disputes involving the clergy and attempted to have independent judges nominated by the bishops: A.G.S.,D.deC.,leg.4,no.97,13 May 1432.

against the Moors and that lands given or sold into mortmain should continue to provide royal taxes.¹ Undoubtedly the clergy enjoyed a highly privileged position with regard to the royal taxes. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Church itself taxed the clergy and that the proceeds often went to the Crown.

Although the Castilian Church was an integral part of the western Church, several practical differences deserve to be stressed. The first point concerns the ecclesiastical geography of Castile. There was clearly a radical difference of structure between the north and south of the kingdom. North of Toledo, the kingdom of Castile was densely settled with monasteries. South of Toledo, however, there were only some five monasteries.² Juridically the members of the military orders were monks: in practice they were nothing of the sort. The southern half of the kingdom of Castile, therefore, must surely have been the least monastic area in the whole of western Europe.

A similar situation existed with regard to bishoprics. North of a line drawn through Toledo there were eighteen bishoprics. The line itself cuts through four bishoprics. South of the line there were only six bishoprics. Apart from the bishopric of Cádiz the southern /

1 See the undated petition by procuradores in A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.15 and O.R., Lib.i, tit.iii, ley i.

2 This conclusion is based on an approximate count of the fifteenth century references to monastic houses which I have encountered in the sources.

southern dioceses were vast. Only Burgos among the northern bishoprics can really be compared in size to the southern dioceses.¹

The reasons for this difference of structure between north and south are not hard to find. Quite obviously the diocesan structure corresponded to the timetable of the reconquest. The quick and vast advance in the thirteenth century accounts for the fast bishoprics of Toledo, Córdoba, and Seville. The fifteenth century conquest of the remaining Moorish area accounts for the four moderately sized bishoprics which somewhat helped to restore the balance between north and south.²

Equally obviously the geography of monasticism corresponded to the timetable of the reconquest, with the Tagus acting as a barrier.³ It was natural that the monasteries should be situated in areas well defended from the ebb and flow of the reconquest. Added to this was the fact that the lands of the south went to the military orders.⁴ The other factor that influenced the geography of monasticism was that its impulse declined prior to the /

1 The four bishoprics in the centre were Coria, Plasencia, Toledo, and Cuenca. Figures for the whole of Spain are: 30 bishoprics to the north, 6 on either side of the line, 7 to the south.

2 The bishoprics of Málaga, Granada, Guadix and Almería together formed an area roughly equivalent to the single diocese of Córdoba.

3 Maur Cocheril, *ubi supra*, p.245.

4 *Ibid*, pp.240-2.

the reconquest of the south. The eleventh and twelfth centuries had been the great age for Cluniac and Cistercian houses. The thirteenth century saw both a decline in the number of monastic foundations and the reconquest of the south. Neither the Cistercians nor Benedictines pushed south. Only the Benedictines of Silos founded monasteries in Madrid and Seville.¹ In the later middle ages the Jeronimites founded a few houses to the south of the main northern field of monasteries. The Cistercians founded one house in Seville. In short the total number of foundations in the later middle ages was not impressive.²

It is not too risky to conclude that the south was an area of purely nominal christianity where the fabric of the Church was extremely weak. In this connection it is interesting to note that Fernando del Pulgar viewed the situation in much the same way at the end of the fifteenth century. He argued that the problem of the Jews and the lack of Christianity in Andalusia could only be solved by following the example of the north of the kingdom. According to Pulgar's estimate there were some 10,000 young girls in Andalusia between ten and twenty years /

1 Pérez de Urbel, Los monjes españoles, ii. 526.

2 Ibid, pp.527-8; Maur Cocheril, ubi supra, pp.239-40.

years of age. From birth these girls never left their houses and knew of no beliefs save those practised by their parents. Moreover, the majority of the population were not proper Christians for the simple reason that they were not given a lead. These comments suggest that there was a shortage of parish clergy. Indeed Pulgar argued that this lead should be given by people, presumably clergy, sent to the south. Moreover some of these should be converted Jews of the same calibre as those who had for long been giving an outstanding lead in the north. In this way, by example and by proper teaching of doctrine, the problem in the south could be solved.¹ Pulgar's analysis perhaps lacks the proper factual content to support the conclusion that is being put forward. Nevertheless the conclusion is also supported by the fact that a similar situation has prevailed in the south of the peninsula down to the present day.²

How far did ecclesiastical frontiers coincide with political frontiers? In some ways the identification, was remarkable. There were, for example, four military orders /

¹ For Pulgar's view see F. Cantera Burgos, 'Fernando de Pulgar y los conversos', *Sef.*, iv (1944), 308-9.

² The south, it is argued, is an area of 'catholicisme presque sans prêtres'. See R. Ricard, 'La dualité de la civilisation hispanique', *R.H.*, ccxvi (1956), 1-17; P. Chaunu, 'Les Espagnes périphériques', *R.E.S.*, xli (1963), 163; reviews by Chaunu in *R.H.*, ccxii (1954), 363-9.

orders theoretically dependent on the French monastery of Morimond: Avis in Portugal, Alcántara and Calatrava in Castile, and Montesa in the Crown of Aragon. The two Castilian orders, moreover, conformed to a previous political pattern since the order of Alcántara was on the whole a Leonese order while Calatrava was Castilian. A similar situation can be detected for some of the purely monastic orders. The western frontier of old Castile, for example, seems to have acted as a boundary between the Cistercian houses dependent on Clairvaux and those dependent on Morimond.¹

Political and ecclesiastical frontiers were, however, extremely vague. In many cases the two did not coincide. In the first place there were the obvious cases of dependence on places like Cluny, Cîteaux, Clairvaux and Morimond. As will be seen below, there was a tendency in the fifteenth century for Castilian monasticism to form a separate congregation free of foreign influence.² The striking examples of fluctuating frontiers, however, concern the Castilian dioceses.

There were three ecclesiastical provinces in Castile. The most important province was undoubtedly that of Toledo which contained one archbishopric and seven bishoprics.

The /

1 Maur Cocheril, ubi supra, p.246.

2 See below pp.304-5

The province of Santiago contained one archbishopric and twelve bishoprics.¹ The province of Seville consisted solely of the archbishopric itself and the bishopric of Cádiz. These three provinces were all within the political frontiers of the kingdom of Castile. The three northern bishoprics of Oviedo, León, and Burgos, however, depended directly on the papacy. Indeed the bishop of Burgos was usually accorded the honours of an archbishop at public assemblies. Moreover the bishopric of Cartagena was theoretically in the ecclesiastical province of Valencia and the bishopric of Calahorra was in the Aragonese province of Zaragoza. At a lower level the problem was even more complex. The diocese of Cartagena, for example, although mostly situated in Castilian territory but dependent on the province of Valencia, included the area of Orihuela which was, politically, in Valencia.²

2. /

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- 1 The ecclesiastical and political frontiers between Portugal and Castile were clarified during the Schism. In 1393 Boniface IX transferred to Lisbon those bishoprics in Portugal which had depended on Santiago. In 1394 Clement VII retaliated by granting to Santiago those Galician bishoprics which had belonged to Braga. Martin V tacitly accepted these changes. D. Mansilla, 'Disputas diocesanas entre Toledo, Braga, y Compostela', *A.A.*, iii (1955), 89-143.
- 2 P. Tarsicio de Ascona, *La elección y reforma del episcopado* (Madrid, 1960), pp. 28-9, 33-4, 51. (Henceforth cited as Tarsicio, *Elección*).

2. The Wealth of the Church

It has been argued that the wealth of the nobility cannot be simply related to a measurement of the land they controlled. Indeed, precisely because agrarian and seigneurial income was insufficient the nobility attempted to recoup their losses by securing royal privileges at court and controlling the land-based royal revenues within their lordships. In general terms the elements of this same crisis, resulting from rising prices and inelastic income, faced the Church. How did the Church in Castile fare in this crisis?¹

1) Lordship and mortmain

The juridical lordships held by the Church (abadengos) were in most essential features the same as those held by the nobility (señoríos). The Crown retained the same functions with regard to the ecclesiastical lordships as it did with the noble lordships. Like the noble, the abbot or bishop exercised the mero y mixto imperio - that is the ordinary administrative, judicial, and executive powers exercised by the ecclesiastical seigneurial officials.

Mortmain, however, made a great difference in the case /

¹ For papal income from Castile, which is not included in the following discussion, see J. Fernández Alonso, 'Los enviados pontificios y la colectoría en España', A.A., ii (1954), 51-122. This shows that inelastic papal revenues declined sharply in the 1460s and 1470s because the collectors failed to adjust their administration in order to take into account the devaluations of the maravedí.

case of the Church. It meant less chance for the Crown to recover land, it meant a steady process of growth and consolidation for the ecclesiastical lordships, and it meant that other methods had to be employed to protect crown lands from the Church than those used against the nobility.

Royal attempts to control the provision and selection of the individuals who were to wield this power was one obvious method which is discussed below. It has also been noted that almost all royal grants of land to the laity contained clauses prohibiting the recipient from transferring the land to the Church without special royal permission.

More striking, however, is the fact that royal grants to the Church in the later middle ages were few in number. Thus, while the Crown showered gifts of land and revenues on the nobility, the amount of wealth which the Church derived from the Crown in the fifteenth century was negligible.

This then was a striking difference. The nobility's main source of revenue was the Crown. The Church obviously derived some of its wealth from grants made by the Crown in preceding centuries but, in the fifteenth century, the Church, unlike the nobility, did not manage to extract extra revenues and land from the Crown.

Royal /

Royal grants of land to the Church were by now rare. A glance, for example, at fifteenth-century donations of land to monasteries shows that the Crown rarely figured as the donor. It is true that there were exceptions to this generalization. Henry II, John I and Henry III, for example, helped the monastery of Guadalupe to begin life with the proper attributions of temporal lordship.¹ Similarly, as far as bishoprics are concerned, one can point to the donation in 1410 to the bishop of Palencia and his successors of San Salvador de Pernia and the title of count of Pernia for help provided in the conquest of Antequera.² But these were isolated examples. In general the striking feature was the lack of royal munificence.³

The sharp decline in royal alienation of lands to the Church does not, however, imply that the land controlled by the Church was small. Mortmain protected the massive alienations of former centuries. Moreover the documentation confirms that the impulse of individuals to donate land to the Church was still strong in the /

1 For example, Henry III confirms Henry II's original grant of civil and criminal jurisdiction to Guadalupe; A.H.N., Clero, Pergs, carp. 398, doc.8, 25 April 1391. Henry III's orders the town of Trugillo to surrender Val de Palacios and its area to the officials of the monastery: *ibid*, doc.11, 9 Dec.1393.

2 An excellent study of the structure of this episcopal lordship is R. Carande, 'El obispo, el concejo y los regidores de Palencia', *R.A.B.M. Madrid*, ix (1932) 249-71.

3 Pérez de Urbel, *op.cit.*, ii. 528.

the fifteenth century.¹ More surprisingly, perhaps, monastic documents show that in many cases the monasteries were buying and exchanging land in an attempt to rationalize their holdings.²

There was, therefore, throughout the fifteenth century a continuing trend of donations to the Church. It may well be doubted whether the volume of donations was as great as in previous centuries. Yet the main point is that the Church retained its immense control over land. As with the nobility, it would be pointless to establish an exhaustive catalogue of the geography of these lordships. There is enough evidence to establish the general point and to take the conclusion as read.³ What is far more important is to establish the sources of income. How much money did the Church derive from its lordships by reason of its juridical power? Did the Crown prove as lucrative a source of revenue for the Church as it did for the nobility? How profitable were spiritual /

1 Documentation on the Cistercian monastery of Ríoseco, for example, contains a wide variety of private donations including tierras de pan llevar, vineyards, and usufruct of mills: see the documents dating from 1386-1457 in A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.359, docs.2, 6; carp.360, docs.12,13; carp.361, docs.7,17; carp.362, docs.1-4,9; carp.363, docs.5,9,13; carp.364, doc.16.

2 Detailed references to documents are too numerous to cite. A.H.N., clero, Pergs, carps.360-364 contain more purchases than donations as far as Ríoseco is concerned. Ibid, carp.943, contains documents showing rationalisation of holdings belonging to Santa María de Plasencia. Ibid, carps.400-408, contain documents illustrating the consolidation of dehesas by Guadalupe during the period 1412-78.

3 See Tarsicio, Elección, pp.38-51; the same, Isabel la Católica (Madrid, 1964), pp.430-2; Pérez de Urbel, op. cit., II.532-3.

spiritual sources of revenue? Did the monasteries make money from the agricultural exploitation of their lands?

ii) The Crown as a source of income

The parsimony of the Crown with respect to grants of land is also to be seen in the lack of royal alienations of revenues to the Church. Even if an obviously weighted example is taken this point becomes clear. The Libro de Asientos of 1447 contains data on revenues held from the Crown by five members of the Castilian hierarchy (Table XIII).¹ These five are the archbishop of Toledo, the bishop of Palencia, the bishop of Cuenca, Bishop Fonseca (presumably bishop of Avila), and the bishop of Calahorra. Quite obviously the revenues alienated to these five were in some cases alienated to them in their non-ecclesiastical role. Thus Lope de Barrientos, bishop of Cuenca, who held the greatest amount of mrs (219,571 mrs), did so because he was extraordinarily close to the king and was, in fact, his confessor. Yet the total holdings of the five bishops did not even amount to the sums held by one count of Alba, one count of /

¹ Appendix M below p. 581

of Benavente, one Mendoza, one count of Castro, or one count of Haro (Table XII).¹

It may be objected that an incomplete Libro de Asientos is hardly a satisfactory source of information on the wealth of the Church - it gives, after all, data on a few bishops important at court and nothing else. Moreover, if we look at the problem from the local level, it is possible to build up an impressive picture of apparently substantial privileges deriving both from the Crown and other members of society.

In the first place there were many privileges granting immunities from taxation of various kinds. These exemptions were very varied. In some cases they might be mere confirmations of older privileges which, by the fifteenth century, had ceased to have any real economic significance.² More important were the royal privileges granting a specific number of escusados or exempt peasants to a monastery.³ Finally, there were privileges of a particularly favourable kind which provided exemptions from /

1 Appendix L below pp. 574-80

2 For example Henry III's confirmation, 15 Dec. 1393, exempting the monastery of Bujedo from providing for the needs (mula, baso, yantar) of the royal merinos mayores: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp. 172, doc. 3. With the decline of these officials such an immunity was so irrelevant that the king even granted it to all monasteries: Ibid, carp. 175, doc. 13, 20 Feb. 1392.

3 For example, the confirmations of escusados to the monasteries of Guadalupe and La Vid: ibid, carp. 400, docs. 12, 14-16, 18, 19; carp. 384, doc. 5. Such privileges attracted population and labour and were given in return for prayers.

from heavy burdens of taxation, such as the alcabala,¹ or which facilitated the economic activities of a particular monastery - for example sheep ranching.² By their very nature it is hard to assess the importance of these privileges in terms of actual figures of income.

More important, perhaps, were the privileges which provided extra income. The original grants of lordship, for example, provided the possibility of income derived from the exercise of temporal lordship. The bishop of Sigüenza, for example, was the temporal as well as the spiritual lord of Sigüenza and its lands. Moreover, even although Alfonso XI in 1331 tried to put an end to the endless disputes between the Church and the town by asserting royal overlordship and the right of the townsmen to appeal against the sentences of the episcopal administration, the bishop and chapter of Sigüenza still retained temporal lordship in the form of the castles, towers, keep, municipal posts and justice. It should also be remembered, of course, that lordship brought in revenue /

1 For example the privileges exempting the Cistercians and grangeros of Ríoseco from alcabalas and moneda forera: ibid, carp. 360, doc.5, 5 March 1408; carp. 361, doc.15, 2 May 1426.

2 The monastery of Guadalupe was especially favoured. The summary of all royal privileges relating to sheep ranching on the dorso of ibid, carp.399, doc.22 accurately conveys the essence of the original privileges scattered throughout carps.398-403. Ibid, carp.401, docs.12,13,15 and 18 Jan.1418, are similar privileges but granted by the Infante Enrique and the queen of Aragon for Guadalupe flocks using their lands.

revenue from such taxes as the martiniega. The amount of income provided by lordship varied with the geographical extent of the lordships and also with the powers included in the lordships. Not all bishops and monasteries were in the same privileged position as the bishop of Sigüenza.¹ Indeed, the abbot of Silos even sold the civil and criminal jurisdiction which he held over the town of Silos to the constable of Castile in the early fifteenth century.² The existence of these sources of income has, nevertheless, to be taken into account.

As has been argued, however, the income granted in the actual document setting up a lordship was nowhere as important as the revenues which may have been alienated by the Crown subsequently - additional privileges which, in fact, alienated what was theoretically reserved to the Crown. Once again there is evidence that such privileges were granted to the Church. A few examples of these extra sources of income - relating mainly to monasteries - will prove the point.

The juridical grants of lordship usually retained to /

1 Tarsicio, Elección, pp.38-51; Tarsicio, Isabel la Católica, p.430. For a monastic example see J. Puyol y Alonso, El abadengo de Sahagún (Madrid, 1915), part two, chaps.1-4.

2 Pérez de Urbel, op.cit., ii.528-32 has a general discussion on the decline in value of these lordships and cites this example.

to the Crown the taxes known as escribanías, tercias, and portazgos. There are plenty of examples which can be cited showing that in fact these were often alienated. The monastery of Oña certainly retained the proceeds of the escribanías¹. So too, probably, did the monastery of Sahagún.² As always, the monastery of Guadalupe was in a more favourable position than the other monasteries. In this case the monastery not only held the proceeds of the escribanías, but also the portazgos, although with some difficulty.³ The tercias of certain specified areas were also alienated by the Crown to the monastery.⁴ Although these examples relate only to monasteries, the same type of examples could be cited for the bishoprics and collegiate churches.⁵

Most monasteries also seem to have derived some income from salt, though this was sometimes due not only to royal privileges but to grants from individual nobles. Thus the Benedictine house of Oña received money or salt from /

1 Worth 300 mrs per year: A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg. 1284, doc. dated 13 Sept. 1403.

2 See the sentencia in ibid., Pergs., carp. 941, doc. 14, 24 May 1409.

3 A. Barrado 'El monasterio de Guadalupe y las escribanías', R.E.E., Separata (1952) gives a summary of the revenues and problems. Further data in A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp. 398, docs. 12-14; carp. 399, docs. 18, 20; carp. 400, doc. 6; carp. 402, doc. 10; carp. 404, docs. 7, 13.

4 These areas were Logrosán, Cañamero, Berzocana, and Valdepalacios: ibid., carp. 406, doc. 3, 12 June 1444.

5 For example Henry IV's confirmation, 23 Dec. 1455, of Alfonso XI's privilege to the bishop and chapter of Coria of 3,000 mrs per year on the servicio and montazgo: B.N., MS., 13078, fos. 168R-171R.

from the salines at Añana, Rusio and Posa,¹ the Cistercian monastery of Ríoseco from the salines at Rusio,² the monastery of Guadalupe from Trugillo,³ the Cistercian house at Sobrado from La Coruña,⁴ the Premonstratensian monastery at Bugedo from Añana,⁵ the convent of Santa María Magdalena from the Medinaceli salines.⁶

More important were the juros or perpetual assignments of sums of money on specified royal taxes. In effect the system of juros meant that the theoretical reservation of taxes to the Crown was preserved while the substance was alienated. The Cistercian monastery of Bugedo had a juro from the Crown worth 3,000 mrs p.a.⁷ The female house of Santa Clara de Allariz had 6,000 mrs p.a. assigned on the Galician customs duties.⁸ The Benedictine monastery of San Julián de Samos had 1,000 mrs p.a. assigned on local revenues.⁹ The convent of Santo Domingo el Real in Madrid was given a juro of 20,000 /

1 Royal help to secure payment of privileges: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.318, doc.8, Oct.1394; carp.319, doc.3, 18 Dec.1398. A censo perpetuo assigned on Añana and noble help to secure payment: ibid, carp. 331, docs.19-20, 1 Dec.1469.

2 Ibid, carp.365, doc.1, 23 April 1461.

3 Ibid, carp.408, doc.2, 20 Sept.1470.

4 Ibid, carp.550, doc.6, 28 April 1420.

5 Ibid, carp.175, doc.14, 20 Feb.1392.

6 A.D.M., Med., leg.23, doc.28, 22 Sept.1441.

7 A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.172, doc.15, 18 May 1452.

8 Ibid, carp.1430, doc.13, confirmation of fourteenth century privilege in 1482.

9 Ibid, carp.1265, doc.1, 26 Aug.1399.

20,000 mrs p.a. by Henry IV, assigned on the alcabalas of Huete and its area.¹ The list could be extended, especially when it is remembered that piety led to small scale privileges.²

A list of privileges and lordships, however, does not help in determining their value as a source of income. In some cases this value is impossible to assess - for example, the value of privileges granting exemption from taxation. On the whole, however, it is possible to attempt such an evaluation and the results show that in general these sources of income were worth relatively little. For greater clarity the examples given below refer mainly to the examples already given. In this way the practical applications of privileges can be worked out.

The first and most obvious difficulty concerns the problems entailed in collecting the sums of money involved. The accounts of the monastery of Oña note that the martiniega was not usually collected because of the poverty of the vasallos and that the juro, assigned on the royal alcabalas, did not always 'fit in' with the resources of the tax.³ The incomes derived from escribanías, tercias, and portazgos had to be defended against /

1 A.D.M., Ad., leg.24, doc.21, 28 March 1474 contains the original grant dated 20 Dec.1462.

2 The 1,000 mrs assigned to San Julián de Samos, for example, was for a capellanía.

3 Accounts of Oña in A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg.1297.

against intruders and often the revenues were lost.¹

The same problems of collection also affected the juros and the revenues from salines. Oña had to obtain royal backing in order to have its salt income at Añana protected and, even then, the salt farmers created difficulties.² The nuns at Santa Clara de Allariz had complained bitterly about the usurpations of their juro by the nobleman Pero Ferrández de Castro and it is doubtful whether matters were much improved by the royal re-assignment of the privileges on the Galician ports.³ The monastery of Samos complained that it cost more than 1,000 mrs to collect the privilege of 1,000 mrs assigned on the customs at Vivero. In this case the Crown re-assigned the privilege to royal revenues in the neighbourhood of the monastery.⁴ Not all religious houses were as lucky. The convent of Santo Domingo el Real in Madrid had to sell its juro of 20,000 mrs p.a., within two years of receiving it, because of the difficulties in collecting it.⁵

The /

1 Hence the sentencias and royal documents protecting the privileges: see the documents cited above p.225, n.1-3.

2 The Jewish tax farmers treated the monastic officials with contempt: see docs. cited above p.226, n.1.

3 Document cited above p.226, n.8.

4 Document cited above p.226, n.9.

5 The juro was sold to Lope Vázquez de Acuña in 1464 and is confirmed in the document cited above p.227, n.1.

The second point about these sources of income is that the sums of money involved were small in comparison with other sources of income. The martiniegas and juro on alcabalas held by the monastery of Oña were worth, if collected, 3,000 and 5,000 mrs per annum respectively. These were small sums of money when compared with the total income in money of 53,475 mrs p.a. and an estimated global income of 236,535 mrs p.a. The escribanías of Oña were only worth another 300 mrs p.a.¹ It is true that these may be exceptions. Yet the same picture emerges if a particularly favourable privilege is examined. The portazgo was a tax on trade. Valladolid was an important centre of communications. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that at the end of the century the farm of the portazgo was providing the Church of Santa María la Mayor with 14,650 mrs p.a. This was a large sum by any reckoning but it was still only a fraction of the total income of some 650,000 mrs p.a., the bulk of which came from other sources.²

The last point concerns the volume of privileges granted by the Crown to the Church. It has been argued that, because of static or even declining revenues derived from lordship and land, the nobility turned to the /

1 Accounts of Oña, A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg.1297, 1458.

2 A.C.V.: accounts for the years 1499 and 1500.

the Crown for salvation. Was the Church in economic difficulties and did the privileges which benefited the nobility also benefit the Church? The answer is two-fold. The income derived from lordship also seems to have remained static for the Church at a period when prices rose. For example, the proceeds of the martiniega tax from one village in 1460 would be the same as it had been in the 1390s.¹ Yet the Church, with a few exceptions, did not find an answer to the dilemma in royal largesse.² For what is really striking about royal privileges is their numerical lack of balance between those granted to the nobility and those granted to the Church. Individual bishops may have been politically powerful enough to participate in the noble onslaught on royal revenues. The Church as a whole was not.

iii) /

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- 1 See the enquiry, 18 Feb. 1460, into the obligations of the area of Ciguenza and the traslado of a document of 1397 in A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp. 328, doc. 6.
 - 2 The outstanding exception was the monastery of Guadalupe which was highly favoured by the Trastámaran dynasty and the great nobility. A whole series of juros must be added to the privileges already cited: 12,000 mrs p.a., ibid, carp. 399, doc. 15, 9 June 1408; 20,000 mrs p.a., carp. 406, doc. 8, 15 Oct. 1446; 25,000 mrs p.a., carp. 408, doc. 17, 20 Jan. 1480; 30,000 mrs p.a., ibid, doc. 18, 27 July 1480; 10,000 mrs p.a., ibid, doc. 19, 2 March 1481

iii) Spiritual income

What other sources of income were available? The revenues of benefices included income from such sources as tithes and offerings which in fact derived from the spiritual lordship of the Church. After all tithes and oblations were not theoretically available to the other estates of society. This 'spiritual' income should, therefore, be distinguished from revenues such as the rents and profits arising from agricultural exploitation of land. Yet the very nature of surviving accounts makes such a distinction impossible. Often tithes and oblations were accounted for along with rents paid in grain. The problem is further complicated by the pattern of benefices. Figures may refer to greater or lesser tithes depending on whether they refer to the income of the rector or the vicar. Alternatively figures may refer to pensions or portions or a general farm, depending on the settlement of the problem of revenues after a benefice had been appropriated. These problems are best dealt with in a discussion of patterns of wealth within the Church.¹ One or two general points may, however, be made at this stage.

The tithe system in Castile deserves special mention since it was probably unique in western Europe. As in England /

¹ See below pp. 252-75

England the tithes were generally subdivided into greater and lesser (menudos) tithes, with the obvious difference that wine figured prominently among the greater tithes.¹ The peculiar aspect of the tithe system in Castile was that the Crown received a fixed share of the tithes. This royal share consisted of two ninths of all the tithes paid to the Church and was known as the tercias.² There were other important consequences arising from this fact.

The first general point is that because the Crown had a vested interest in the tithes, the collection and administration of the tithe system was probably made more efficient. Certainly the Crown was willing to help the Church in making sure that the payment of tithes was not impeded in any way. More important still was the fact that the royal administration played an important part at the local level. For if archbishops, bishops, chapters and other members of the Church farmed both the tithes (diezmos) and the tercias of their areas, the royal administration farmed the tercias and alcabalas together. The two systems of farming, however, did not often conflict. The ecclesiastical farmers worked at a local level and were accountable to the royal farmers for the tercias at a /

1 The wine tithe was often paid in mosto or grapes immediately after the harvest.

2 In practice the royal share often consisted of one third since this was more easily and rapidly calculated.

a more general level. It is also remarkable that Church and State - bound by common interest - seem to have rarely conflicted in judicial disputes involving the tithes and the tercias. Royal conditions for the farm of the tercias, at the beginning of the century, envisaged disputes being referred either to archpriests, vicarios, and other ecclesiastical judges or to secular judges such as the alcaldes. The only stipulation was that the disputes should be determined according to principles laid down in the royal farm.¹ In practice, disputes about the tithes probably went before the ecclesiastical courts and those concerning the tercias before the royal courts. In many cases, however, the matter was not so simple. In 1378, for example, a royal official cited a certain Domingo Ferrández de los Huertos before the royal alcaldes of Atienza over a failure to produce the royal tercias of Paredes. Ferrández, in his defence, alleged that he had only collected the tithes of the cathedral chapter at Sigüenza and had at no time collected the tercias. At this point a racionero of the cathedral chapter argued that this was an ecclesiastical matter and should be referred to the bishop of Sigüenza or his vicarios. The judgment of the alcaldes bears witness to the fine balance that existed in this aspect of /

1 A.G.S., D. de C., leg.4, doc.95 contains the farm conditions for 1412-13.

of Church-State relations. They first of all determined that they were the competent authorities to deal with the case since the whole basis of the prosecution was that the royal tercias had not been paid. Then, however, they passed sentence against the royal official on the grounds that the evidence he had produced was flimsy and did not support his case.¹

The second general point concerns the part played by the nobility in controlling tithes. Two ninths of the tithes constituted the royal income of the tercias. It has been argued, however, that the nobility in the fifteenth century attempted to wrest control of royal taxation, either by gaining the necessary privileges or by replacing the Crown in the local administration. Logically, therefore, it is to be expected that the royal tercias in the localities would often fall into the hands of the great nobility. Indeed examples of noble control of the tercias in the localities have already been cited and only one more example need be given. The royal conditions for the farm of the tercias for the years 1412-13 were drawn up during the period when Ferdinand of Antequera was in control of government. Indeed the farm /

¹ See Minguela y Arnedo, Historia de la diócesis de Sigüenza (Madrid, 1910), doc.cxxxi, p.581. An example of a long and involved tithe dispute, due not to friction between Church and State but to the tenacity of Jewish tax farmers, in F. Cantera Burgos, 'Las tercias reales del obispado de Calahorra', Sef., xviii (1958), 291-313.

farm conditions were signed by the infante himself. Is it surprising, therefore, that the only areas exempted from the application of the conditions were the lands of the infante? It merely meant that the infante wanted to be in complete control of the tercias in his own lands.¹

Thus, while the general levying of tithes was reinforced by a royal interest in part of the proceeds, the Church also found that the nobility could prove a powerful rival in the localities. For, if the king was receiving the tercias from the tithes produced throughout the kingdom, the noble was often retaining a minor share of the tithes produced on land under his control. Inevitably, therefore, there are signs that the nobility tried to impede this drain of resources from their lands.

Because accounts lumped together the income derived from tithes and the income derived from rents and direct agricultural exploitation, it is impossible to assess the relative importance of the spiritual sources of income. In the case of the revenues of Santa María la Mayor, Valladolid, some evaluation is possible. In 1498 oblations were worth 1,820 mrs; in 1500 they were worth 1,500 /

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- 1 A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, doc.95. The document appears to have been the chancery model for all the various copies of the farm conditions. See also P.L.Fernández, 'Aspectos fiscales de Villarramiel', I.T.T.M., Separata (1955) for further examples of loss of control over tercias.
 - 2 For example John II's letter, 17 Jan.1454, to the great nobility of Córdoba who had impeded episcopal and royal officials in their collection of tithes: A.D.M., Priego, leg.84, doc.4.

1,500 mrs. These are small sums. Far more important were the lesser tithes. The accounts are confusing at this point. The lesser tithes (menudos) are entered along with prestamos. In all probability the word prestamos refers to some kind of fixed arrangement relating to appropriated benefices. In 1498 the menudos y prestamos were worth 71,375 mrs and in 1500, 82,230 mrs. All these figures must be related to the total incomes of these two years which were respectively 310,420 mrs and 329,318½ mrs. The spiritual revenues, therefore, in this case were approximately worth about 25% of total income.¹

One final tempting approach should be noted so that it can be dismissed. Assuming that figures for royal income from the tercias were roughly equivalent to one third of the total value of the tithes, cannot the global value of tithes for the whole of Castile be calculated? Figures in royal accounts cannot be used for this purpose for substantial reasons. Areas like Galicia escaped the fiscality of the Crown. Moreover, the figures were for taxes farmed out and cannot be used for an ad valorem calculation.

1 See Appendix N below pp. 582-3

iv) Agrarian income: variations, the demesne

The last and most important source of income, as far as the Church was concerned, was the revenue derived from land. Under this heading are included profits from demesne farming, rents from tenant farmers, and even rents for houses. These revenues were clearly not derived from the spiritual lordship of the Church. They did derive from temporal lordship, but are to be distinguished because they were paid in respect of land and not because of any personal relationship between vasallo and señor. In this discussion almost all the information relates, unfortunately, to the monasteries. Only one collegiate church is discussed and, alone, is left to act as an example of non-monastic revenues from land.

The first point to be discussed relates to the types of exploitation of land. Clearly the size of holdings, and the type of agrarian exploitation varied widely. Some of this variation may have been due to differences of population density, climate, and soil. Equally, variation may have been due to a difference of method of exploitation - the Cistercians immediately spring to mind. The documentation of the monastery of Guadalupe, for example, inevitably throws up a picture made up almost entirely /

entirely of ranching activities over a large area.¹ Situated in the heart of the sheep belt of Castile the monks of Guadalupe turned to the natural economic activity of the region. The areas involved were vast. When purchases were made they involved the dehesas or large tracts of pasture land.² In one sense this meant that all land was demesne land. Moreover with the numbers of sheep involved, control of the sheep routes had to be ensured. Sometimes this was guaranteed by both royal and private privileges.³ At other times, even in an area so sparsely populated, the monks found their grazing rights disputed by the only possible entity that could object - the town of Trugillo.⁴

The ranching world of the Guadalupe monks contrasted strongly with the economic activities of the monasteries of Oña and Sahagún which lay much further north. This was a world in which land was carefully delineated when it was bought, gifted, or sold. Thus, a vineyard purchased in 1410 was

in /

1 The Guadalupe documentation is so extensive that only a few examples will be cited in the following footnotes.

2 Examples in A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.400, doc.11; carp.404, docs.18,21; carp.405, doc.1. Unlike the north, lands are large enough for detailed mojonamientos and deslindamientos to be avoided.

3 See above p.223, n.2.

4 Sentencia, 19 Dec.1394, over grazing rights disputed by Trugillo: ibid, carp.398, doc.17. Sentencia, 5 Jan. 1418, over pasture land disputed by Trugillo: ibid, carp.401, doc.11. Concordia with Trugillo over sheep routes: ibid, carp.405, doc.2, 15 Oct.1440. ...

in Sant Felises below the path which comes from Mayorga towards San Martín de Pineda, bounded on one side by the newly planted vineyard of the hut belonging to the priory, on the second side by the vineyard of Juan Alfonso, on the third side by the vineyard of Llorente González, tailor and inhabitant of Mayorga, and on the fourth side by the said path.¹

There was variety in the size of the land units exploited. The monastery of Oña had some vineyards which required a work force of over 100 labourers.² The monastery of Sahagún also seems to have controlled some large areas.³ But the general pattern seems to have been one of mixed farming and small holdings. In the lugar of Cigüenza, for example, that there were at least thirtyseven holdings and mixed farming is suggested by the payments of grain, wine, and bacon which were paid to the monastery of Oña.⁴ Elsewhere on the Oña lands there were plenty of vineyards with a labour force as little as from three to ten labourers to counterbalance the larger units mentioned.⁵ The same pattern was true for Sahagún. Lands belonging to the monastery in the village of Castro Bol, for example, were small cereal farming units producing no more than between /

1 This example in ibid, carp.941, doc.23, 3 Nov.1410. The priory, attached to Sahagún, was San Felises of Mayorga.

2 Survey of the Oña vineyards for the year 1457: ibid, Papeles, leg.1297.

3 For example, ibid, leg.2691 bis, lease dated 4 Dec.1424.

4 ibid, Pergs., carp.328, doc.6, 18 Feb.1460 containing traslado of 10 Nov.1397.

5 See above n.2.

between half a fanega and ten fanegas of grain per year.¹

The contrast which has been made between the monasteries of Oña and Sahagún, on the one hand, and Guadalupe, on the other, is not intended to suggest a simple difference between the north and the south. Thus, to the north, the Premonstratensians of La Vid enjoyed tax exemption on 5,000 sheep.² Further north the Cistercians at Ríoseco also undertook a certain amount of sheep farming.³ The Cistercians, moreover, still differed from most of the other orders in their structure of granges and lay brothers.⁴ The broad contrast between north and south must thus be qualified with innumerable exceptions, the details of which are largely unknown.

The variations in economic activity may have been important. Yet, as far as income was concerned, the relationship between demesne farming and leases was probably far more important. It has been argued that demesne farming by the nobility was almost totally lacking. Was the same true of the Church? Descriptions of the demesne or réserve are lacking. Yet there can be no doubt that on some of the monastic lands demesne farming /

1 Survey of 1404 of lands in Castro Bol: ibid, Papeles, leg.2659.

2 Above p.31.

3 A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.361, doc.4, 11 June 1423, is a sentencia in a dispute over pasture rights and involving one of the granges.

4 The word granja is regularly used in the Bugedo and Ríoseco documents.

farming existed. Documents sometimes list land, vineyards, and pasturage which were held by no individual and provided no rent or dues - yet the productive capacity of these lands is indicated. These lands must, therefore, have been elements of the demesne. There are, however, more concrete details on demesne exploitation. The monastery of Oña serves as a good example. For Oña, the existence of demesne exploitation is quite clearly indicated by the labour obligations which some of the tenants had to perform. In Tamayo, for example, the tenants on the units of land known as solares had to provide three days work per year on the monastic demesne.¹ There was, indeed, an established formula of some sort on this point. The lease of a house and half a solar, for example, entailed the provision of one and a half days work per year.² Elsewhere on the Oña lands, the labour obligations were slightly different. In Ciguenza, for example, thirteen holdings were obliged to provide 103 days work per year on the demesne. In this example, however, there seems to have been no formula underlying the /

1 The word solar lacks precision. The best description of it is in J. Gautier-Dalché, 'Le domaine du monastère de Santo Toribio', A.E.M., ii (1965), 63-117. In Tamayo it referred to the house and land which together formed the tenant holding.

2 For example the lease of one house and half a solar in Tamayo to Juan Ruys: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.317, doc.9, 1 Oct.1391.

the labour obligation. Thus, while two holdings had to provide twenty four days work each per year, four holdings only had to provide one day each per year.¹

Not all demesne work was carried out on the basis of obligatory boon work. On the contrary, the vineyards of Oña in the 1450s had a work force of 820 obreros or workers. The work force at the Mancual vineyards, for example, was 100 and at Sorroyo it was 110.²

The existence of demesne exploitation cannot, therefore, be doubted. Yet both the efficiency and the extent of this type of exploitation are clearly important points to establish. If Oña is once again taken as an example, then it seems clear that demesne farming was neither extensive or flourishing. Indeed there are signs that the demesne was declining in size. Generally labour obligations were rarely stipulated. Moreover the extreme leniency of these obligations - for example, three days a year - implies either that demesne farming was not important or that a paid work force was used instead. Yet evidence suggests that paid labour only existed for the vineyards³, and some of these were in bad shape. At La Riba /

1 Ibid, carp.328, doc.6, 18 Feb.1460 and traslado, 10 Nov. 1397.

2 Ibid, Papeles, leg.1297, survey of vineyards, 145?

3 The survey of all Oña revenues and income for 1458, also in leg.1297, only quotes labour costs for the vineyards.

Riba, for example, there were only three paid labourers and the 'vineyard' was described as uncultivated ground (campo todo). At La Puerta de Maça and La Calçada there were seventeen paid labourers: despite the work force the results were negligible and were lamely blamed on the fact that 'the Jews and those who pass by eat the produce'.¹ More important still is the evidence which points to a deliberate commutation of labour obligations into payments in kind. Several documents show that obligations of four days work per year were replaced by payments of half a fanega of grain per year.²

v) Agrarian income: leases

In the negotiations leading up to the constitutional settlement of 1465, one of the complaints made by Henry IV concerned the legal disputes arising from the fact that '... the Church grants much of its wealth to the laity by censuses and emphyteusis ...'³. In effect the overwhelming impression given by the documentation is that the vast bulk of ecclesiastical income derived from the payments of /

1 Survey of vineyards, 145?

2 A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.321, docs.13-16. It should be noted, however, that these documents all refer to one area and that other dues, e.g., the yantar, were not affected by commutation.

3 C.D.R.A.H., 371 (cix, 1465).

of those who leased Church lands. Indeed in some cases - for example the collegiate church of Santa María in Valladolid - there was no demesne exploitation at all and landed income consisted entirely of payments from the tenants (Table XIV).¹ The strength of the income of the Church, therefore, depended to a large extent on the kind of leases which were drawn up and the payments involved.

Leases in perpetuity seem to have been most common. Since most payments were in kind this presumably is to be explained in terms of administrative convenience. Leases of this type ensured a steady source of income which did not necessarily depreciate as prices rose. Sometimes, but rarely, the leases also included the obligation to perform boon work. Thus, for example, when the monastery of Oña drew up a perpetual lease with Juan Ruys and his descendants for land in Tamayo the payments were 'according to what we receive from the other solares in Tamayo' - that is, three days boon work, three chickens and three fanegas of wheat per year from each solar.² A better example concerns the Cistercians at Buggedo. In 1478 /

1 Appendix N below pp. 582-3.

2 Example already cited: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp. 317, doc.9. More common were perpetual leases of the kind granted by Ríoseco to Juan Díaz de Argomedo in which boon work was not stipulated and payments do not appear to have conformed to a standardised system: ibid, carp.362, doc.6, 23 Nov.1433.

1478 they made a perpetual lease of one of their granges to the council and omes buenos of Montuenga. This lease in perpetuity meant that administrative problems were shelved in return for a steady income - in this case the council had to pay the Cistercians the substantial amount of ten cargas of grain per year.¹

There is another reason which helps to explain the predominance of leases in perpetuity. Often the documents indicate that the leases are of lands donated to the Church and that the tenants are the donors themselves. Thus a perpetual lease by the Cistercians of Ríoseco in 1454 makes it clear that the land in question, a solar in San Esteban, had been donated to the monastery earlier in the same year by the prospective tenants.² Moreover, it would seem that in almost all cases of this kind the payments which were required were designated by the term infurción. The explanation for this probably has to be sought in an earlier period. It may be that the infurción originally arose as a payment from the donor who donated land in order to secure protection.³ Certainly by the fifteenth century this explanation does not hold. At times the word infurción is used in a loose sense to cover several kinds of payments. At Ona, for example, the infurción, besides designating payments of grain, wine and bacon, could also include the remnants /

1 The grange was at Gogulillos and the cargas of grain had to be half wheat and half barley: ibid, carp.172, doc.14, 8 April 1478.

2 Ibid, carp.364, doc.6, 9 March 1454.

3 See Gautier-Dalché, ubi supra, pp.95-102.

remnants of the former obligation known as fonsadera.¹ Equally, in other leases, the infurción was distinguished from other obligations. Thus, when the monastery of Santa Maria de Piasca granted a perpetual lease to two brothers who had donated land, the infurción of one sesto of wheat per year was distinguished from obligations involving the building of a house.² Yet whatever the reason for dealing with donations in this way, it seems probable that the problems of additions to the demesne were avoided and amicable relations were maintained with the donors.

Not all leases, however, were made in perpetuity. Nor indeed were all donations treated in the manner described above. Other leases may arbitrarily be divided into two categories - those of varying lengths of tenure and those based on a share cropping agreement.

Similar to the perpetual leases were the leases for several lives. It may well be suspected that in practice these leases ended up as leases in perpetuity. The similarity, however, is to be inferred in that these leases also seem to have aimed at avoiding the problems of direct farming and administration. A good example is the lease made to Luis Ferrández de Carrión by the monastery /

1 The fonsadera had originally been a military obligation. Of twenty two solares in Ciguenza two at least included elements of the fonsadera in their payments of infurciones: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs, carp.328, doc.6.

2 Lease to the Valverde brothers: ibid, carp.944, doc.5, 7 Jan.1468.

monastery of Sahagún in 1439. The lease was for the life of the tenant, his wife, and all his children. Ferrándes himself was not an ordinary peasant: on the contrary, he was a notary (escribano del rey) in the town of Carrión. The lease is interesting in that it shows how far a monastery was willing to alienate its sources of income in return for a payment which avoided administrative problems. In this case the lease of the area in question, San Andrés del Aldea, included everything: lands, pasturage, vineyards, houses, tithes, censuses, martiniegas, and infurciones. The terms of the lease imply that Ferrándes was being given land already held (at least in part) by other tenants who, henceforth, would pay their dues to Ferrándes and not to the monastery. Ferrándes himself was not expected to farm the land. Indeed, the conditions of the lease obliged Ferrándes to re-lease the land only to mere peasants (labradores llanos), to build a house and to provide the necessary equipment. The monastery in this case, therefore, avoided the problem of collecting diverse revenues from small holders and received in return 600 mrs per year.¹ The similarity with the leases in perpetuity, however, does not end here, for donated land was sometimes leased /

1 Ibid, carp.943, doc.6, 5 June 1439.

leased back to donors for a period of several lives.¹

Shorter leases did exist. Yet on the whole these were rare. Certainly examples of leases as short as four years can be cited but anything below a ten year lease was exceptional and even the ten year lease was not common.²

The other fairly common form of lease was that based on the share-cropping or métayage arrangement. Two general points about the métayage are worth noting. Almost all leases were in perpetuity and almost all the leases affected vineyards only. Further than these two points variations appear - especially with regard to payments. The share cropping might take the simple form of a straight division of the harvest produced. A typical example is the perpetual lease granted by the Benedictines of Sahagún to an inhabitant of Perroso. The latter had to promise not to alienate the land to the nobility or other ecclesiastical corporations. He also promised to maintain the vineyard in good condition.³ Half the harvest each year was to go to the monastery in perpetuity. Occasionally the shares varied. A lease by the Premonstratensians of Bujedo in 1435 shows the unfavourable conditions that could be imposed on the tenant. The land granted was stubble. The tenant was /

1 Ibid, carp.363, doc.6, 15 Sept.1447, lease for two lives of a solar to its donor, Juan Pérez de San Martín del Rojo.

2 For example the four year lease of a corral to a group of vecinos of Sahagún: ibid, Papeles, leg.2691^{bis}, doc. dated 4 Dec.1424.

3 Ibid, Pergs., carp.943, doc.3, 25 Jan.1434, lease to Alfonso Oria.

was given five years in which he had to bring vineyards into production at his own expense. At the end of the five years the harvests were to be shared on the basis of 6/11ths to the monastery and 5/11ths to the tenant.¹ Sometimes the share cropping took the form of a division of land rather than a division of harvests. Thus, Sahagún leased a vineyard on condition that at the end of six years the land was to be divided in half between the monastery and the tenant. The latter was to have his half in perpetuity, but the monastery was to have first option on any sale of the land.²

How extensive was share cropping? As has been pointed out only vineyards seem to have been involved. Further than this it is difficult to make any serviceable generalization. Certainly on the lands of Oña share cropping seems to have been fairly extensive on the vineyards. This emerges from a survey that was made of the monastic vineyards in the 1450s. The survey showed the areas directly worked by the monastery itself and those vineyards which were worked in métayage (a medias). From the figures given, a force of only 498 paid labourers were working on the demesne as against 1,144 labourers working on the vineyards held by share croppers.³

The /

1 Ibid, carp.176, doc.1, 3 Aug.1435, lease of two heredades to Juan Martínez.

2 Ibid, carp.941, doc.1, 1 Jan.1406, lease to Juan Locano.

3 Ibid, Papeles, leg.1279, survey of 1457

The landed income of the monasteries was, on the whole, derived from rents. While demesne exploitation and short leases were not unknown the most common pattern seems to have been one of leases in perpetuity. Moreover payments were almost always in kind. Thus the monastic income was subject to severe fluctuation from climatical factors but did not necessarily lose value with the sharp price rise apparent from 1440 onwards. There were disadvantages, however, about this structure of landed income. In the first place, it obviously did not allow for any attempt to increase income either by increased demesne farming or by the periodic revision of payments from tenants. Secondly, much depended on the reasons for the switch from demesne exploitation to leases in perpetuity. It may well be that the change over was forced on monasteries because demesne exploitation had become impossible at a particular period of time. It was, however, impossible to return to demesne farming once the situation had improved because perpetual leases had been granted. Thus, although landed income was highly important in comparison to other sources of income, this does not mean to say that it was worth a lot. This process appears to have been general and affected Cistercian houses such as Belmonte and Bujedo as /

as well as the Benedictine monasteries. It may be suspected also that the leases in perpetuity led in the end to usurpations of monastic land. Such at least is the picture with respect to the less powerful monasteries.

An important exception to the structure of landed income which has been described is provided by the collegiate church at Valladolid. Almost all the leases of the church entailed payments in cash. The only payments in kind - and they were insignificant - consisted of chickens. Did these leases lose their value through time? Unfortunately the accounts are not particularly specific about the leases. Information is given, in an indirect way, about the lengths of the leases for the orchards and vineyards. The entries of the accounts, in these cases, enter the date of the original contract of a lease and furnish other details which help to round off the picture of payments and obligations. Thus, although the accounts date from the end of the century, it is possible to find leases dating back to 1460 and leases which are made for two lives. A detailed examination of these few leases is not really worth while.¹ The bulk of the church's income came from property within the town. Houses owned within the one quarter of the collación /

¹ The few examples give the impression of carefully exploited and small units of lands. An orchard donated for obits, for example, included houses, two mechanical wells, vines, fig and other fruit trees, and was surrounded by thatched walls. The rent was 2,600 mrs p.a. and the chapter had invested 3,410 mrs in maintenance.

collación de la Mayor brought in 72,799 mrs from tenants. Presumably these would be fairly short leases but no information on this point is available.¹

3. Patterns of Wealth within the Church

How was the wealth of the Church distributed? It has been calculated that there were between ten and fifteen thousand benefices in the kingdom of Castile in the fifteenth century.² For obvious reasons the value of these benefices fluctuated. Moreover, the distribution of wealth within the Church depended on the number of benefices held by any one person or appropriated by any ecclesiastical corporation. For example, Francisco Ortiz, canon of Toledo and at one time papal nuncio, held one canonry, one archdeaconry, nine benefices, two prés-
:tamos, two chaplaincies, and one archpresbytery at the time of his death.³ The problem seems easiest to tackle by discussing the bishoprics, the cathedral and collegiate churches /

1 Rents from houses outwith the town were only worth 650 mrs p.a. Many of the town houses were donated to the church. In 1418, for example, an oidor of the royal audiencia donated several houses in Santa Olalla street to the church: A.C.V., leg.4, doc.30, 16 Nov.1418.

2 Tarsicio, Isabel la Católica, p.487. This calculation does not include the archbishopric of Granada or the beneficios abaciales of the monasteries.

3 Ibid, pp.487-8.

churches, the parish churches, and the monasteries in turn.

1) Bishoprics

No adequate assessment can be made of the wealth of the Castilian bishoprics. All that can be attempted here is to examine the few details known about the wealthiest diocese, Toledo, and then relate this to the approximate index of wealth provided by Eubel and Hoberg.¹

Within the diocese of Toledo, the cathedral church and the two collegiate churches at Alcalá and Talavera contained over 200 dignitaries, canonries, prebends and chaplaincies. The diocese was also divided into twenty arciprestazgos and four vicarías which contained:-

Benefices with cure of souls	575
Benefices simple	386
<u>Préstamos</u>	345
Chaplaincies	<u>448</u>
	<u>1754</u>

All the clergy of these benefices were, to a greater or lesser degree, subject to the control of the archbishop and his visitor general. The archbishopric also contained almost 20,000 vecinos who were vasallos of the archbishop.

The /

¹ Conveniently tabulated in Tarsicio, Elección, p.35.

The income of the archbishop was administered by two receptores mayores (one in Toledo and the other in Alcalá), a contador mayor who was in charge of the accounts, and an official who supervised payments and assignments. Figures for income at the end of the fifteenth century were:-

1495 30,000 ducados or 11,250,000 mrs

1497 38,500 ducados or 14,437,000 mrs

1499 36,400 ducados or 13,650,000 mrs

These revenues derived from the properties of the mesa and the dues paid by the villages and vasallos of the archbishopric.¹ By any standards this was an extremely large income. Small wonder that Rodrigo de la Torre wrote to Henry IV that the archbishop of Toledo

appears to be more like a pope than a prelate; he maintains an army of 1,000 men, while the master of Santiago only manages with 700 men and the greatest counts of France only maintain 300 lances and even then not for all the year round.²

There can be little doubt that the archbishop of Toledo was extremely powerful, even if fourteen other dioceses in Europe carried a higher assessment for common services. The military power of the archbishop, moreover, was not exaggerated by Rodrigo de la Torre.³

As /

1 Ibid, pp.38-9. I have converted the ducados into mrs in order to make the figures more meaningful.

2 Cited in ibid, p.42 and L. Serrano, Los reyes católicos y la ciudad de Burgos, p.24.

3 See the figures for the military forces of archbishop Cisneros in Tarsicio, Elección, p.40.

As far as the other dioceses are concerned, the evidence of the assessments only underlines the obvious point that there was a great disparity in wealth. The three archbishoprics naturally carried the highest assessments : 8,000 florins for Toledo, 6,000 florins for Santiago, and 5,000 florins for Seville. In contrast the poorest bishoprics - Ciudad Rodrigo, Cartagena, Badajoz, and Cádiz - were assessed at 450 florins and even less.

It must be remembered, however, that the common services assessments varied little from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries and that the fifteenth century imposed its realities on the situation. It seems that the Galician dioceses were not so highly valued as the assessments would suggest. In part this may have been due to the economic, social, and even demographic shift of emphasis to the south. But the most important factor here was the degree to which the Galician dioceses were subject to arbitrary usurpations by the nobility. The situation in the bishopric of Tuy serves as a good example. The 'protector' (encomendado) of the bishopric and chapter, Alvar Pérez de Sotomayor, quite openly controlled the wealth of the bishopric and prevented the bishop, Luis de Pimentel, from entering into possession, despite the fact that /

that he was supported by Henry IV and the counts of Santa Marta and Benavente. Nor was the bishopric of Tuy an exception.¹ All the dioceses of Galicia and Asturias suffered in some degree from the existence of encomiendas which, in practice, detracted from their value.² In these circumstances it is not surprising that, for example, the archbishopric of Seville was a more valuable prize than that of Santiago. This can be clearly seen in the curious episode which involved the Fonseca prelates. In 1460 don Alonso de Fonseca, archbishop of Seville, succeeded in obtaining the archbishopric of Santiago for his nephew. Galicia, at this time, was in the middle of the profoundest anarchy. The Fonseca uncle, therefore, decided to change sees temporarily with his nephew in order to secure stability in Santiago. The bulls for the exchange were obtained, Santiago was pacified, and in 1463 the uncle requested his nephew to effect the re-exchange of archbishoprics. The nephew, however, obviously found himself well placed in Seville. He refused to be moved from this flourishing area to the see of Compostela. In the end, after vigorous royal and papal intervention and armed conflict in Seville, the Fonseca uncle recovered the southern archbishopric.³ Significantly, even after peace had been established /

1 See J.L. Santos Díez, La encomienda de monasterios en la corona de Castilla (Rome-Madrid, 1961), pp.106-7, 128-9; P. Galindo Romeo, Tuy en la baja edad media (Zaragoza, 1923), pp.64-67.

2 On encomiendas see below pp. 271-3.

3 J. Palanco Romero, op.cit., pp.64-66.

established in Santiago, both uncle and nephew had been fighting to secure the archbishopric with the lower assessment.

ii) Cathedral and collegiate churches

The cathedral and collegiate churches of the archbishopric of Toledo have been mentioned in the foregoing discussion. Yet the episcopate hardly controlled the wealth of these churches in Castile. The bishops might enjoy some patronage in these churches - for example, the right of induction - but on the whole their power was recognised only as an act of courtesy. Often a mutual respect between cathedral chapters and bishops led to the avoidance of friction.¹ Yet the signs of tension were not lacking and they could have important consequences when collegiate churches were involved. Important towns like Valladolid and Soria, for example, had their churches controlled by 'outsiders' - in this case the bishops of Palencia and Osma respectively. The collegiate church in Valladolid subsequently bought its exemption from episcopal control and made itself directly dependent on the papacy. Nevertheless the pressure could build up into /

¹ See below p. 281.

into a claim for the creation of a new bishopric.¹

Despite signs of conflict, however, the factor which needs to be stressed is the unity of these churches and their bishops as far as wealth is concerned. For there can be no doubt that, together, they formed the 'greater nobility' of the Church. Bishops and chapters controlled the really wealthy benefices of the Church and were clearly to be distinguished from the lower clergy. This broad division of wealth was also reflected socially and perhaps culturally as well. The bishop often began his ecclesiastical career with a benefice in a cathedral chapter or collegiate church. Upward mobility from the lower levels into the world of canonries and prebends must have been rare.

Briefly stated, the tenure of a canonry with prebend entitled the holder to a share in the revenues of the cathedral or collegiate chapter (the mesa capitular). Table XIV shows the income and revenues of the collegiate church of Santa María la Mayor, Valladolid, for the years 1498 and 1500.² The totals for these years were presumably shared out among the prebends after various adjustments and expenses had been made. For example, the accounts make it clear that the entries for portazgo, cucharas /

1 See the payments to the papacy in Table XIV, Appendix N and the pressure for the creation of a bishopric discussed in Tarsicio, Elección, pp.31-2.

2 See Appendix N, below pp. 582-3.

cucharas, medianedo and oblations were regarded as being specifically for the 'common fund' - that is, income which was shared out among the resident canons living in their prebendal houses. Similarly, some revenue obviously had to be set aside for such items as the fábrica and ornaments of the church itself.

As far as the dignitaries of the chapters are concerned, however, the income of the mesa capitular only reveals part of the complicated problem of revenues. Such accounts only show the corporate income of the cathedral or church involved.

Members of the cathedral chapters - especially the dignitaries - drew substantial income from their participation in diocesan administration.¹ The development of the cathedral chapters in this respect seems to show little variation from the pattern in France and England. From the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards, the pattern of canonries, prebends, archdeacons, archdeaconries, deans, precentors and treasurers, emerges clearly. From the twelfth to the sixteenth century the capitular dignitaries played an important part not only in the chapter but also in the diocese. They territorialised their functions and, along with the bishop, exercised control over the churches in /

¹ For a discussion of their capitular functions see E. Duro Peña, 'Las antiguas dignidades de la cathedral de Orense', A.E.M., i (1964), 306-12.

in their area until the council of Trent.¹

Members of cathedral chapters could, therefore, receive income which was not included in the mesa capitular or indeed the mesa episcopal. The cathedral chapter of Orense serves as an example. There were eleven dignitaries in the chapter - the dean, precentor, five archdeacons, the maestrescuela, the abadia de la Trinidad, the treasurer, and the vicariato.¹ These dignitaries drew income from the mesa capitular which varied according to the tenure and type of prebend involved in each case.² Yet all the dignitaries, apart from the treasurer,³ also drew income from the areas which they controlled as administrators within the diocese. From this point of view they can be regarded as archdeacons even though only five of them were designated as such.

The resources of the archdeacons, apart from the mesa capitular, derived from the diocesan areas under their control.⁴ /

1 There were twelve dignities if the bishop is included. The archdeacons were those of Castela, Limia, Varoncelle, Búbal, and Celanova. The maestrescuela supervised the estudio de gramática. The church of the Holy Trinity and its hospital was made a dignity of the chapter by bishop Manrique (1368-76). The vicariato was one of the diocesan areas attached to the mesa capitular and managed by a vicario of the chapter. See ibid, pp. 289-90, 303, 310-11.

2 Participation in capitular income was based not on the dignities themselves but on the canonries and prebends attached to the dignities. At Orense the mesa capitular was distributed between 32 prebends; 8 cardenalías or canonías presbiterales, 18 canonries, and 12 raciones. The racion was held by a racionero or porcionero and was equivalent to half a prebend. Ibid, pp. 291, 292, 305.

3 The treasurer seems to have been poorly remunerated in comparison to the other dignitaries. Both in Orense and Compostela there was no jurisdictional area attached to the dignity.

4 For the powers which such a control implied see Duro Peña, ubi supra, pp. 313-24.

control. The archdeacon levied chancillerías for each collation to a benefice. This usually consisted of one mark of silver. He levied luctuosas at the death of every rector or vicar within his area - usually the most valuable item of non-landed wealth.¹ He received procurations which varied according to the churches within his territory and were paid in cash. He had a share in the income from the greater tithes of grain and wine and, in one case, half of the greater tithes of the parishes where the incumbents were not the rectors. Income from the greater tithes was paid in kind. The shares held by archdeacons in lesser tithes (escondoyta) were usually paid in cash along with the procurations. Penas imposed on the clergy also provided income. Finally, the right of presentation in some areas also meant that the archdeacon received a yantar. This latter might take the form of a payment in kind but was often commuted into money. These were the basic sources of income for the archdeacons and the capitular dignitaries with archidiaconal functions.²

Other revenues varied according to the specific sources of income attached to each dignity. Landed rents were /

1 Usually a mule or an ox. The bishop, of course, also levied luctuosas on the death of the dignitaries.

2 On all these sources of income, Duro Peña, ubi supra, pp. 325-330.

were important in some cases. The emoluments attached to each dignity varied and the holder might also possess canonries and dignities elsewhere. Finally, the appropriation of a rectory to a dignity also made for substantial variation. Indeed appropriations could be extremely important and were not always confined to parish churches. The financial position of the maestrescuela of Orense, for example, was greatly enhanced when the archdeaconry of Caldelas virtually disappeared and was annexed to the dignity in 1400.¹

The territorial arrangements of the diocese of Orense show that diocesan administration was organized not only to provide income for the bishop, but also for the dignitaries of the chapter. The gradations of wealth among these spiritual lords of the Church are only of interest in a limited way. In general terms these dignitaries formed the great nobility of the Church. Usually of noble origin and living sumptuously on the incomes attached to their dignities, these men were clearly separated from the parish clergy.

iii) /

¹ Ibid., p.292.

iii) The Parish Clergy

It is difficult to assess the economic position of the parochial clergy. Tithes were the main source of income and were intended, theoretically, to provide for the parson. It has already been noted, however, that the Crown received a share of the tithes in the form of tercias and that tithes formed part of the income of the archdeacons and other dignitaries of cathedral chapters. The dispersal of tithes is made yet clearer when the problem is considered in terms of one specific geographical area. The tithes of La Molina, for example, were shared by two monasteries, the bishop of Burgos, the noble family who built the churches, and the clergy serving these churches.¹ Clearly, as elsewhere in Europe, tithes were not always payments in return for direct spiritual services. They became a kind of rent, paid to a remote recipient who performed the corresponding spiritual functions by hired deputy.

The reasons for the dispersal of parochial revenues into different pockets were broadly similar to those prevailing in England and France. The enjoyment of the tithes and glebe by a rector, who had cure of souls and resided in his parish, presents no problem. Yet Castile was /

¹ A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.327, doc.3.

was no exception in that rectors could appoint a vicar who dealt with the cure of souls on the basis of a stipend or a share in the tithes. More important, and perhaps more damaging to the parish clergy, was the number of parishes appropriated to prebendal stalls and monasteries.¹

Appropriations and the existence of vicars were not features which distinguished the parochial structure of Castile from the rest of Europe. But the degree of power wielded by patrons in some areas of the kingdom of Castile was unusually strong and deserves to be emphasised.² Benefices could be in the gift of anyone from the king down to the parishioners themselves. On the whole, however, advowsons were in the hands of the nobility and higher ecclesiastics, such as bishops, abbots and cathedral dignitaries. Naturally the very possession of the gift of a benefice was important. Yet noble patrons, above all, seem to have had a fair degree of influence over /

1 The division of revenues between rectors and vicars remains unstudied. Not all arrangements followed the pattern of a division into greater and lesser tithes. Some incumbents paid a rent or cense to the rector. Ibid, carp.941, doc.15, 10 Feb.1410, for example, is the remission of such a rent for ten years granted by the abbot of Sahagún to the priest of San Miguel de Villardiga. In this case the monastery was rector by virtue of an appropriation. For appropriations to prebendal stalls and archidiaconal control over such appropriations see Duro Peña, ubi supra, pp.330,319.

2 For the normal procedure in presentations and collations to parishes, ibid, pp.318-9.

over the parochial revenues.¹ This power was very marked in the Basque provinces. Indeed, so anomalous was the situation in the Basque provinces that there were definite variations from the European pattern.

In the Basque area the idea that churches were the private property of the lay founders survived into the late middle ages. It was a situation that underlined the poverty of the parish clergy. Theoretically most Basque parish churches were in the patronage of the Crown or of the nobility. In reality, they were almost entirely controlled by noble patrons since the Crown alienated its right of patronage to the nobility.² In practice also, the advowson of parish churches was exercised without any reference to the bishop.³ In terms of income the parish priest must have been in a desperate position. Complaints to the Crown, in the fourteenth century, resulted in a settlement which alleviated the position of the clergy in the parishes theoretically in the gift of /

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- 1 Patronage was not always vested in one man or corporation. For interesting examples - in one of which the parishioners had a share in the patronage - see ibid, pp.320, 330.
 - 2 Such alienations were regarded as being similar to other royal mercedes. Indeed the grant of the patronage of a church could be linked to an obligation to perform military service. Inheritance of patronage produced the diviseros - that is, several members of a family all sharing the same right of patronage. García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.282 ff.
 - 3 The designation of the parish churches as monasterios seems partly to have been motivated by a desire to escape episcopal control. Moreover, from the twelfth century, the nobility built churches in their own areas or became the 'protectors' of churches and ended by controlling the revenues. Ibid, p.282.

of the Crown. By this settlement parochial income was to be equally shared between the de facto noble patron and the priest. After investigation it was decided that the revenues of the thirty-seven parishes involved were worth 17,000 mrs. The clergy, therefore, were left with a derisory total of 8,500 mrs per year. The share of each priest, of course, varied according to the parish. The priest at Dima, for example, would receive 2,000 mrs per year by the terms of the settlement while the priest of the parish of Gamiz was condemned to an income of 50 mrs per year.¹ Yet these priests were privileged, for in the remaining churches of the Basque provinces the parish tithes seem to have belonged entirely to the lay patrons.² Tithes could be sold, exchanged, and inherited. Indeed, the same seems to have been true of the churches themselves. Some twenty two churches, for example, remained the 'property' of the same families throughout the fifteenth century while fourteen others were virtually sold or bartered. There was, moreover, a tendency for patronage to be concentrated in fewer hands. From a survey carried out in 1487, it appeared that forty two parish churches were in the hands of five patrons who disposed of almost all the 545,300 mrs which these parishes produced per year.³

Clearly /

1 On this settlement of 1383, ibid, pp.311,343-4.

2 Despite complaints by the bishops of Burgos, Calahorra, León, and Pamplona, the Crown tended to maintain the status quo: ibid, pp.311-2.

3 On these points and for a statistical presentation of the 1487 figures: ibid, pp.283,313,391-3.

Clearly the Basque provinces, where the priest was a member of the noble patron's household, showed the parish clergy in their weakest position. Yet the little evidence that there is, suggests that in other areas of the kingdom matters were not much better. In the lands of the military orders the parish clergy received none of the tithes and had to subsist on oblations known as 'pie de altar'.¹ Elsewhere, parishes seem to have failed to provide a living for their incumbents. In 1445, for example, a parishioner of San Miguel de Bangueses complained to the dean of Orense that the rector did not reside in the parish and that church services were not available despite the existence of a modest living. The rector's defence against this allegation was simple : not only was there no living in the parish but the indispensable liturgical books and ornaments were lacking. His was not an isolated case. In 1467 the archdeacon of Limia found that some of the churches in his archdeaconry were completely deserted and unserved by any clergy.²

iv) The Monasteries

There can be no doubt that the monasteries of Castile in /

1 For more details see below pp. 315-6.

2 Duro Peña, ubi supra, pp. 320, 322.

in the later middle ages controlled vast stretches of land. Yet, too often, monastic wealth has been viewed only in terms of land and rights. Thus, for example, the wealth of the Benedictine monastery at Samos is indicated by stating that it controlled twenty five dependent monasteries, 200 villages, and 105 churches.¹ These general impressions are erroneous. To state that a monastery 'controlled' villages or land does not indicate what kind of control was involved. Much also depended on the size of the population in any given area. A map of the lands and villages of the monastery of Oña might, therefore, give a totally false impression. In the late fifteenth century the population of some areas controlled by Oña was extremely low. Bentrotea, for example, had a total population of twenty; Castellanos, thirty six; Aguas, twenty-five; the Granja de Royales, twenty two. These are figures for total population. In terms of tax or rent paying units, the totals were much lower: Bentrotea a possible maximum of five; Castellanos, nine; Aguas, six; and the Granja de Royales, five.²

More reliable data would suggest that the monasteries were undergoing a financial crisis. This was certainly true in the fourteenth century. Figures for 1338, for example, show that the great monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos /

1 For this and other examples Tarsicio, Elección, pp.532, 541 and Tarsicio, Isabel la Católica, pp.559-62.

2 See Tarsicio, Isabel la Católica, p.561. I have used a coefficient of four.

was having problems in balancing income and expenditure (Table XV).¹ Nor do the monasteries seem to have recovered in the fifteenth century. If we concentrate on the two extremes of wealth and poverty, and also take into account reliable evidence of a general kind, the relative lack of economic security becomes apparent.

The most general indication is provided by the fact that, throughout the fifteenth century, the highest assessment on any monastery in Castile for papal taxes failed to pass above the level of 1,000 florins.² Obviously such information cannot be used with any degree of precision. It does, however, indicate that there were no monasteries in Castile to compare with such great French houses as Cluny, Fécamp, and Corvey. Moreover, the validity of this general indication is confirmed by a detailed examination of the wealthiest monastery in Castile - the monastery of Oña.³

The income of the monastery⁴ clearly demonstrates some /

1 See Appendix O below p. 584

2 Tarsicio, *Isabel la Católica*, p. 560.

3 Pérez de Urbel, *op.cit.*, II, p. 543 states that Oña was the wealthiest monastery.

4 A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg. 1297 contains important documents on Oña revenues in the fifteenth century: 1) A detailed and undated survey of all income in cash by the mayordomo, fray García de Valladolid. 2) An undated survey of all income in grain, arranged by localities. 3) An account of all the monastic income, drawn up in 1458 for the purposes of a subsidy assessment. This is summarised in Appendix P. 4) The account of Juan Ferrándes de Vililla, *ibid*, leg. 1320, for income in grain in 1464.

some of the general points already made: 76.43% of all income was in kind, almost all income was derived from land and agriculture, and hardly any income was derived from the Crown (Table XVI).¹ It is of greater interest to establish the relative wealth of the monastery. There can be no doubt that the total income was a substantial one. Yet it must be remembered that this was supposed to be the wealthiest monastery in the kingdom. Bearing this in mind, it is worth noting that the monastery's income was, in fact, less than half the income which individual members of the great nobility received from the Crown alone and only slightly higher than the seigneurial and landed income of a man like Diego Pérez Sarmiento.²

Monastic income also seems to have been subject to fairly heavy burdens of expenditure. On this point the Oña assessment of 1458 only provides a general indication. After making obvious points about deductions for repairs and bad weather it ends:-

... from the said income which remains after the said items have been deducted, the upkeep of the monks and familiares has to be provided - they usually pay sixty persons. Pensions for life also have to be provided for the monks who belonged to the time of Abbot Pedro. Furthermore the cost of working the vineyards usually comes to over 80,000 mrs per year.

The /

1 Appendix P below p. 585

2 Tables V and XI in Appendices E and K, below pp. 565-6, 543.

The statement is brief but it supports the general evidence available for other monasteries. Lay servants - even in Cistercian houses where the number of lay brothers had declined - had to be paid.¹ Pensions and annuities drained monastic income. Corrodies provided badly needed cash but, in the long run, they only served to increase the burden on monastic resources. Indeed, in Castile, the individual benefiting from a corrody was designated by the word racionero which was also used for the prebendary of a cathedral or collegiate chapter. These racioneros lived in the vicinity of the monastery and enjoyed the same privileges as the monks as far as clothing and food were concerned.² In general terms the upkeep of all these people involved considerable expense even if it is allowed that monasteries like Sahagún, which provided for close on 100 people, were exceptions.³

Many monasteries also found that much of their wealth was usurped by the nobility. Generally the usurpations were given theoretical justification by the encomienda.⁴ The encomienda was an agreement between a monastery and a noble by which the latter afforded protection in return for /

1 Pérez de Urbel, op.cit., ii.546-7.

2 Ibid, pp.547-52 and 553-4 where the escusados are also discussed.

3 Ibid, p.547. In Silos there were some 80 people only 30 of whom were monks.

4 The encomienda involving lay protectors, bore no relation to benefices held in commendam.

for some of the monastic revenues. Yet, in a great many cases, this protection was illusory. The encomienda was forced on the monastery by the power of the local magnate and revenues and labour services were arbitrarily usurped.¹

As might be expected, the encomiendas and the usurpations were greatest when royal power was at its weakest and where local warfare was persistent and endemic. In general terms, the period of greatest abuse was the fourteenth century. In 1380, however, matters came to a head and John I appointed a four man commission to deal with the problem. The commission acted extremely swiftly and efficiently and produced a whole series of mandatory judgements in December of the same year.² The situation revealed by the commission in 1380 was alarming.³ Obviously a death grip had been established by some of the nobility on the monasteries. Even the king's bastard brother, Alfonso Enríquez, was implicated up to the hilt in a 'protection system' covering the monasteries of Cornellana, Rañón, Carvajal, and Sahagún. The count of Haro, Pedro Fernández, had usurped revenues of Oña, Silos, Arlanza, Las Heulgas, and Ríoseco. The abbot of Oña, in fact, denounced the count for holding an encomienda, against the monastery's will, over some of the most lucrative /

1 See Santos Díez, op.cit., pp.76-8, 99-105.

2 For the membership and work of this commission, ibid., pp.149-76.

3 See Appendix Q below pp.586-8

lucrative lands in the lordships of the monastery.¹ The vigorous action taken by the Crown in 1380 did not, however, put an end to encomiendas and usurpations. In 1394, Clement VII had to come to the aid of Sahagún. In 1440, the Crown was again acting in defence of Silos against usurpations by the count of Haro. Three years later the same count of Haro managed to establish an encomienda over the monastery and town council of Covarrubias.² These fragmentary pieces of evidence indicate that the problems still existed, even if the actions of 1380 had led to a decline in the total usurpations of the nobility. Indeed, it is only to be expected that some areas like Galicia and Asturias would continue to feel the full weight of noble usurpations during the fifteenth century anarchy. Even the reign of the Catholic sovereigns saw a need for the revival of the measures of 1380 against encomiendas.³

The encomiendas helped to depress many monasteries into a state of real and abject poverty. It has been seen that the richest monastery, Oña, did not enjoy an income which, in relative terms, could be termed wealthy. Other monasteries /

1 All the areas are listed in the sentencia of the commission: A.H.N., Clero, Papeles, leg.1282, doc. dated 22 Dec.1380. For political implications in the royal action against the nobility see L. Suárez Fernández, Juan I, rey de Castilla (Madrid, 1955), pp.22-4.

2 See Santos Díez, op.cit., pp.39,200; Puyol y Alonso, op.cit., pp.133-4.

3 Santos Díez, op.cit., p.202.

monasteries probably fared no better. The powerful Benedictine monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla - said to control 110 dependent monastic houses - found itself in serious debt to Jewish money lenders. Henry II had to free the monastery from all its debts to Jews but, even then, in 1389, the monastery once again had to borrow 10,000 marcs from a Jew in Logroño in order to pay annates to Clement VII.¹ In the smaller monasteries the evidence of visitations revealed a deplorable situation as the following examples illustrate.² At Salamanca it was found that the monks had been forced to pawn a bell, a silver chalice, and many of the ornaments (1345): several years later no chalices or ecclesiastical vestments were to be found at all. The priory of San Baudillo de Pinar lost so much of its wealth that, by 1392, even the stonework of the bell tower no longer belonged to the priory. Many monasteries could only afford chalices made from lead and visitations showed that buildings were falling apart and that, in some cases, the monks did not even enjoy adequate board and lodging. The Benedictine monastery at Budiño had no roof and the only proper buildings were huts of straw (1392). The buildings of Santa Agueda in Ciudad /

1 Pérez de Urbel, op.cit., ii.542.

2 For what follows ibid, ii.585-6.

Ciudad Rodrigo were in such a deplorable condition that the visitors had to find lodgings in the town (1349). Jubia (1336), Rates (1349), Dueñas (1340) and Salamanca (1460) were completely in ruins. Valverde had even reached the stage of being used as a stable and was full of dung (1335). Doubtless there were important exceptions, yet the general impression is one of utter desolation.

It is not surprising to find that some monasteries, which had in former times been extremely rich and powerful, had declined to a spiritual and economic subsistence level. Nájera, Carrión, Dueñas, Camprodón, and San Vicente de Salamanca, could hardly provide for twelve monks. Between 1380 and 1395 there were never more than ten monks at Nájera. Dueñas had three monks in 1336 and only one monk several years later.¹ Not all monasteries were affected so gravely. Indeed, as will be seen below, there were signs of some sort of monastic revival in the fifteenth century. But generally there seems little doubt that the monasteries were passing through a lean period economically.

4. /

1 Ibid., ii.586-7.

4. Church and State: control of episcopal appointments and ecclesiastical taxes

It has been argued that, at the local level, much of the wealth of the Church was usurped by the nobility. Many of the parish clergy failed to retain an adequate share of the tithes and monastic income often ended up in the pockets of the noble holders of encomiendas. But who controlled appointments to bishoprics and who benefited from the ecclesiastical taxes which were levied on the clergy?

The concordat of the Spanish nation, promulgated in May 1418, theoretically restored free canonical elections and dealt a severe blow at papal provisions.¹ In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the papacy had attempted, as elsewhere in Europe, to obtain greater control over ecclesiastical appointments. The Schism, however, ensured that no pope would ever again attempt to control benefices on the same scale as John XXII or Urban V. It was also clear that the Schism had added to the power of the monarch.² Yet there was one crucial point which remained far from clear in the concordat of 1418. Was it likely /

1 This discussion is confined to the period after the Schism. For Castile and the Schism see L. Suárez Fernández, Castilla, el cisma y la crisis conciliar (Madrid, 1960).

2 The last pope wilfully to ignore the royal wishes completely was Benedict XIII. His attempt to secure the archbishopric of Toledo for his nephew was successful but called forth a violent reaction from Henry III. This was to be the last papal success with Toledo.

likely that the monarchy would entertain the claims of cathedral chapters to free canonical elections?

In fact the concordat of 1418 was ignored almost as soon as it was promulgated. Instead the basis of procedure was laid down in the bull Sedis Apostolicae of 1421 which was later amplified by the bull Cum Tibi Deus of 1456. The 'ancient customs' governing appointments to benefices in the kingdom of Castile were confirmed. The formulation of these customs was essentially the work of John II in a letter requesting papal approval. While John II made no reference to the concordat he made it clear that canonical election was theoretically the only legal method of appointment. Yet canonical elections were by ancient custom influenced by the king himself and chapters elected those individuals 'pro quibus reges instarent'. By accepting these 'ancient customs' in 1421, Martin V virtually nullified the concordat of 1418. Indeed, it is possible that in 1456 Calixtus III was going further and suggesting that appointments be made by direct agreement between Crown and papacy. In practice, the papacy had agreed to canonical elections under royal control, although papal reservations were not in theory impossible.¹

This /

¹ A detailed discussion and the texts of the bulls in Tarsicio, Elección, pp.63-7, 69-71, 313-5.

This situation, outlined above, prevailed until 1460 and almost without exception major appointments were made according to the modus vivendi reached in 1421. Juan Martínez de Contreras, dean of Toledo, was elected archbishop by the chapter of Toledo in accordance with the express wishes of the king.¹ On his death, in 1434, the chapter again elected the nominee of the king. This time, significantly, the king's choice was Juan de Cerezuela, brother of the royal favourite, Alvaro de Luna.² A similar situation prevailed in the other bishoprics if the evidence of chroniclers is to be believed. Alfonso de Madrigal, for example, owed his appointment to the see of Avila directly to royal pressure.³ There was, however, at least one bitter clash concerning the see of Coria in 1445. The details and outcome are obscure. It is fairly clear that John II found difficulty in obtaining papal approval for his candidate and he countered by putting pressure on the chapter of Coria. In letters to the chapter he argued that the see of Coria was peculiarly important because of its strategic position on the frontier. He reminded the chapter that any papal provision would be

contrary /

1 Ibid., p.68. John II sent his camarero to convey his wishes to the chapter: B.N., MS., 13104, fos.99R-V, 9 Nov.1422.

2 Tarsicio, Elección, p.69.

3 Claros Varones, p.137.

contrary to ... the bulls which I have received ... that no pope can make such provisions ... save at my petition and request

The king also placed an embargo on the revenues sede vacante and ordered all papal bulls on the matter to be sent directly to him for examination.¹ Apart from this exception, however, it would appear that the system begun in 1421 worked well until 1460.

Between 1460 and 1474 the situation changed owing to an increasing tension between Crown and papacy and the political anarchy in Castile.² It is true that many appointments continued to be made according to the arrangement reached in 1421. Elections to the sees of Córdoba and Coria during this period, for example, were all subject to royal intervention and all accepted by the papacy. Yet there were a number of cases which seem to indicate that the papacy was trying to retract papal concessions and reserve the provision of all benefices worth more than 200 livres tournois. The provision of Cardinal Jacobo de Veneris by Pius II to the see of León, in 1460, was straightforward since the see had fallen vacant in Rome. In other cases, however, the papacy acted on the basis of reservations /

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- 1 This clash remains, strangely, unstudied. Details are taken from three royal letters in B.N., MS., 13078, fos.160R-167R, dated 27 Oct., 20 May, and 10 Aug.1445.
 2 For what follows see Tarsicio, Elección, pp.69,73-86; J. Fernández Alonso, 'Los enviados pontificios en España de 1466 a 1475', A.A., ii (1954), 67-70.

reservations which were bitterly contested - in Sigüenza (1465), Tuy (1468), Palencia (1469), and Cuenca (1469).

It is no accident that these cases occurred after the opponents of Henry IV had met in Avila in 1465, dethroned the effigy of the king, and elected Alfonso XII as king. Consequently, in each case of disputed episcopal succession, it is extremely hard to discern a consistent royal position. In almost all cases the opposition was expressed by canonical election post et contra reservationem. But the opposition of the cathedral chapters did not necessarily reflect royal interest. In Sigüenza, in 1465, the chapter's candidate was supported, not by Henry IV, but by such leaders of Alfonso XII's party as Archbishop Carillo of Toledo and the marquis of Villena. In Cuenca in 1469, on the other hand, the chapter was simply acting on behalf of a powerful local noble, Juan de Hurtado.

The decade immediately prior to the accession of the Catholic sovereigns, therefore, witnessed a confused situation during which the papacy attempted to reimpose papal reservations. The events of this decade, however, were an exception. When the Catholic sovereigns reimposed royal control over the Church they did so precisely on the basis of the bull Sedis Apostolicae which John II had extracted /

extracted from Martin V in 1421.

In many cases the king of Castile decisively intervened in the election of bishops. Yet cathedral chapters and the members of the great nobility also formed powerful pressure groups.

By the fifteenth century cathedral chapters had virtually gained independence from episcopal control. The collegiate chapter at Valladolid considered itself totally exempt from the control of the bishop of Palencia. In the bishopric of Burgos the struggle between bishop and chapter became really serious during the episcopacy of Juan García Manrique (1381-92). From the mid-fifteenth century Bishops Alfonso de Cartagena (1435-56) and Luis de Acuña (1456-95) found that capitular resistance was too powerful to be overcome. In Burgos, as in other bishoprics, disputes were temporarily settled by agreements between bishop and chapter. These agreements did not solve the fundamental issues, however, and the disputes continued down to the eighteenth century.¹ It was a situation similar to the loss of control by bishops over some of the great monasteries.²

The /

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- 1 For Burgos see D. Mansilla, 'Reacción del cabildo de Burgos ante las visitas y otros actos de jurisdicción intentados por sus obispos', *H. Sacra*, x(1957), 135-59. For the text of one such agreement, between bishop Luis de Acuña and the chapter of Segovia in 1456, and covering a wide range of disputes including control over lands, appointments to benefices, enjoyment of tithes, and the granting of leases: M. Quintanilla, 'Concordia entre el obispo y el cabildo', *E.S.*, vi(1954), 320-7.
- 2 For a detailed example, pre-dating this period, see the introduction in L. Serrano, *Cartulario de San Millán de la Cogolla* (Madrid, 1930). For general remarks, Pérez de Urbel, *op.cit.*, ii.532-5.

The independence defended by the cathedral chapters accorded well with the power which they in fact represented. The dignitaries were often members of the powerful noble families of Castile. Preferment to a capitular dignity could mean the opening of a path to a bishopric. It was not at all certain, therefore, that chapters would always accept intervention in elections. In most cases, no doubt, they accepted the king's candidate gracefully.¹ Yet in Sigüenza in 1465, the chapter came out in open revolt. It is true that, at the beginning, their election of the dean, Diego López de Madrid was taken as a defence against a papal reservation. But the revolt of the chapter gained momentum. As against papal bulls and excommunications, Diego López appealed to a future council. Moreover, in 1467, the see again became vacant and the chapter continued their resistance - but this time against the king's man, Bishop Pedro González de Mendoza. In the end the dean and his followers were captured and imprisoned. The example of Sigüenza shows the extent to which cathedral chapters could still resist the power of the papacy and the monarchy.² But, although the chapters could and did put up resistance, they were invariably /

1 In 1422, for example, if there had been a free election at Toledo the maestrescuela of the chapter would have been elected instead of Martínez de Contreras.

2 Sigüenza is only the most striking of a fair number of examples. See Palanco Romero, op.cit., pp.64-5; Tarsicio, Elección, pp.9-10; Fernández Alonso, ubi supra, pp.66-75.

invariably defeated in the end. They were not powerful enough to succeed in imposing their candidates.

How successful were the great nobility in securing appointments to bishoprics and in controlling episcopal wealth? In some cases - especially in Galicia - the great nobility resorted to the same use of force at a local level which enabled them to usurp monastic wealth. In 1460, for example, don Luis de Osorio attempted to usurp the wealth of the archbishopric of Santiago by force of arms.¹ Indeed, the situation in Galicia was critical as the constitutional settlement of 1465 shows. The bishop of Lugo had been dispossessed and his bishopric taken over by the counts of Trastámara and Lemos. A similar situation prevailed in the bishopric of Tuy which was occupied by Alvar Pérez de Sotomayor.² Outside Galicia, the use of force by the nobility at a local level was rare but not unknown. On the death of Archbishop Fonseca of Seville, for example, the chapter, under pressure from the powerful Guzmán family, elected Fadrique de Guzmán, brother of the duke of Medina Sidonia. Henry IV, however, had written to Sixtus IV in favour of Pedro González de Mendoza, bishop of Sigüenza. The pope reacted by rejecting both candidates and putting forward his /

¹ Palanco Romero, *op.cit.*, pp.62-4.

² C.D.R.A.H., 368-9 (cix, 1465); *ibid.*, 147-8 (li, 22 Feb. 1456).

his nephew, Pedro Riario. In the end Mendoza's cause triumphed, but only after a bitter struggle between the Mendoza and Guzmán families.¹

The use of force by the nobility, however, was on the whole exceptional. Control over appointments to bishoprics was seen as being vested in the king. Hence the nobility viewed the problem as one of establishing political control at court and using the royal power in their own interests. The nobility even attempted to argue a constitutional case on this point in 1465. They demanded that Henry IV

should remember to petition on behalf of capable, worthy, and learned individuals, nobles, sons of the great nobility of the kingdom, and the many good and learned men in the schools of Salamanca and Valladolid who do not have benefices, as well as petitioning for his chaplains and servants.

The point was driven home by a demand that all appointments to benefices should be decided by the king in agreement with the majority of his council.²

The power of the monarchy over appointments to bishoprics could, therefore, be wielded by others than the king. Indeed, this was precisely one of John II's accusations against Alvaro de Luna. Luna, he maintained, had used the royal power to his own benefit by interfering in the /

¹ Tarsicio, *Elección*, p.83.

² *C.D.R.A.H.*, 368(cix, 1465).

the elections of bishops and abbots and by establishing his own representative at the papal court.¹ There can be little doubt that, during Luna's period as royal favourite, John II had fully agreed with such interventions in elections. Yet it is also true that royal control over appointments was highly susceptible to pressure from the great nobility. In February 1450, for example, the count of Haro managed to obtain a written agreement from John II which, among other matters, stipulated that the king should use his power over benefices in the count's interests:²

Furthermore it pleases the king to petition our Holy Father for the second bishopric falling vacant in favour of the person designated by the said count to the king, and he will petition and insist on his candidature until success is attained. Henceforth the king will also take into account the wishes of the count, as far as is possible, in those benefices which fall vacant.

Such an agreement not only secured the official backing of the Crown, but also avoided the necessity of mounting political pressure on a cathedral chapter and fighting a losing battle in support of canonical elections.

Attention was focussed on the monarchy because effective control over appointments to the ecclesiastical hierarchy lay with the king. In addition, however, the Castilian monarchy probably extracted more financial benefits from the papacy than any other monarchy in Europe.

The /

1 *Ibid.*, 84-5(xli, 18 June 1453).

2 B.N., MS., 638, fol. 57R.

The weakness of the papacy after the Schism¹ and the justification of the war against Granada strengthened the claims of the monarchy. The tercias, as has been seen, were virtually a permanent and regular source of income for the Crown. Ostensibly the tercias were used in the holy war against Granada and the papacy attempted, with little success, to ensure that they were used for this purpose. Martin V, for example, stipulated that the tercias should be used against Granada, should not be alienated to individuals and that every twenty years some of the proceeds should be given to the papal camera and to the churches of Castile.² There was however, no effective way of enforcing these conditions.³

The papacy afforded further income to the monarchy from the cruzada and the subsídios or décimas⁴. Cruzada revenues /

1 At Constance John II's ambassadors asked Martin V to grant the monarchy 150,000 florins. This exorbitant demand was clearly related to John II's support of Martin V and the restoration of papal fiscality in Castile. In the end the sum, payable by the Castilian clergy, was reduced to 80,000 florins. L. Suárez Fernández, Castilla, el cisma y la crisis conciliar, p.103.

2 J. Goñi Gaztambide, Historia de la bula de la cruzada (Vitoria, 1958), pp.342-3.

3 An exception must be made for the logical but undiplomatic actions of Benedict XIII who, at one stage, even refused to extend the concession of the tercias to the regent, Catherine of Lancaster: L. Suárez Fernández, Castilla, el cisma y la crisis conciliar, pp.74-5. Subsequent references to conditions relating to the tercias were nothing more than the expression of pious hopes or political intrigue. For example, John II's accusation that Alvaro de Luna had misapplied revenues from the tercias was pure cant and hypocrisy, C.D.R.A.H., 85(xii, 18 June 1453).

4 See Goñi Gaztambide, op.cit., chaps.xii and xiv for a detailed treatment of these taxes in the fifteenth century.

revenues were raised by the sale of indulgences and the subsídios or décimas were direct taxes on the Castilian clergy. These were not regular revenues and they were not granted by the papacy on a permanent basis. In theory they were granted to promote particular crusades against the infidel. Both John II and Henry IV were adept at obtaining these concessions by requesting papal support for real or imaginary campaigns against Granada.¹ Further income was provided for the Crown, from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, when the papacy attempted to raise money for the war against the Turks and had to share the proceeds with the Crown.²

The fifteenth century, therefore, witnessed a collaboration between monarchy and papacy which worked to their mutual advantage. Only occasionally was real friction discernible during the pontificates of Pius II and Sixtus IV³. The result was that the first estate, although exempt from direct royal taxation, paid considerable sums of money to the monarchy which were levied at the command of the papacy. These were taxes which were bitterly resented by the clergy and their collection proved increasingly difficult. In 1465 the clergy demanded /

1 See, especially, ibid, pp.342-7, 350-70.

2 In 1456, for example, Calixtus III imposed a décima for the crusade against the Turks. This was reduced in Castile to a sum of 100,000 florins, half of which was to go to the Crown.

3 See Tarsicio, Elección, pp.492-8.

demanded a total and permanent abolition of subsídios and décimas. Significantly, this demand was addressed to the monarchy and not to Rome.¹ It was a demand that was doomed to failure. Indeed, after 1478, the monarchy benefited from a further papal concession when Sixtus IV virtually handed over complete control of the Inquisition and its profits to the Crown.

5). The Quality of Religious Life: abuses, reform, autonomy

The quality of religious life in Castile was in most essentials similar to the rest of western Europe.² In Castile, as elsewhere, the clergy are condemned and held up to contempt in the literature of the period. The entire Libro de Buen Amor by Juan Ruiz, archpriest of Hita, is a magnificent testament of religious life in fourteenth-century Castile.³ Pero López de Ayala, in his Rimado de Palacio, wrote a blistering section on the clergy in which he described their ignorance, simony, complete lack of interest in religion, concubines, and illegitimate children.⁴ Towards the end of the fifteenth century matters had /

1 The demand of 1465 in C.D.R.A.H., 367-8(cix, 1465). For the resentment and resistance of the clergy see details in J. Fernandez Alonso, ubi supra, pp. 51-122.

2 See D. Hay, op.cit., chap. xii, pp. 299-332.

3 See, for example, the reception of don Amor by the clergy: Juan Ruiz, Libro de Buen Amor (Austral edition, 1962), pp. 122-4.

4 López de Ayala, Rimado de Palacio (B.A.E.) lvii, 431-2.

had not improved much if the evidence of the Celestina is to be believed.¹

Evidence, in fact, exists for all the old familiar abuses - pluralism,² absenteeism,³ abuse of powers to impose ecclesiastical penalties,⁴ immorality, and vagrant priests and monks.⁵ There was the same lack of regular machinery to reform the worst of these abuses.⁶ The same 'obsession with the need to die well' provided a ready market for indulgences, and led to the same investment in perpetual masses, confraternities, and chapels.

Mariology /

1 For example, Celestina's description in Act nine of her arrangements of the love affairs of the clergy.

2 For example, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, author of De remediis afflictarum ecclesiarum, was himself a pluralist: R. Truime, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo (Washington, 1958), pp. 92-3, 201-3.

3 For example, the bishop of Mondoñedo, Fadrique de Guzmán, spent the years 1466-90 in Seville where the bishop of Jaén also kept his town houses: A. González Palencia, 'Nuevos datos biográficos', Bol. M. y P., xi (1929), 22-39.

4 See the extreme actions by the abbot of Sahagún, in 1406, against the town, the council, and the corregidor: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs, carp. 940, docs. 8, 15; carp. 941, docs. 2, 4, 5.

5 See, for example, the evidence for the bishopric of Calahorra in Tarsicio, Isabel la Católica, p. 474.

6 See J. Zunzunegui, 'Concilios y sínodos españoles medievales', H. Sagra, i (1948), 127-33; Pérez de Urbel, op. cit., ii. 570-4. The diocese of Burgos, for example, exempt from all metropolitan authority and visitation, only witnessed eight diocesan synods between 1382-1474.

Mariology, pilgrimages, and the cult of saints all appear to have increased in importance in the fifteenth century.¹

One point perhaps deserves special attention. Apart from problems related to the Jews and Moors,² it is a remarkable fact that in Castile in the fifteenth century, there is hardly any evidence for the existence of heresy or mysticism. In the late 1440's a popular movement existed for a brief period in Durango. The chief features seem to have been communal wealth, the denial of the real presence, and a refusal to hold the cross in reverence. The movement, led by the Franciscan Alonso de Mella, brother of the bishop of Zamora, found its greatest support among peasants and artisans. Some of the heretics were burnt but Alonso de Mella managed to escape to Granada.³ This small movement was the only popular one of its kind. Earlier, some supporters of Benedict XIII had resisted for some time in the area of Burgos.⁴ There were also those who opposed the sale of indulgences. Indeed Pedro de Osma, professor at Salamanca, alarmed the ecclesiastical authorities to such an extent by his attacks on indulgences that he was tried for heresy.⁵ Yet these were the isolated protests /

1 See especially Sancho, Historia, ii, chap. 1. For an astonishing centre of pilgrimage, attracting moors from Granada as well as christians, see J. Torres Fontes, El monasterio de San Ginés de la Jara (Murcia, 1965).

2 For the conversos and Jews see below

3 See Alonso de Cartagena, Defensorium Unitatis Christianae, ed. P. Manuel Alonso (Madrid, 1943), pp. 40-3.

4 L. Suárez Fernández, Castilla, el cisma y la crisis conciliar, p. 101.

5 J. Coni Castambide, op.cit., chap. xv.

protests of individuals and not of movements.

What kind of men were the bishops? Alvarez de Toledo, Guzmán, Figueroa, Acuña, Stúñiga, Mendoza, Manrique, Silva, Velasco, Sotomayor, Pimentel - all these names appear in the list of fifteenth-century Castilian bishops. These were men born into the episcopate and connected on all sides to the elite network of the greatest social and political figures of the age. Archbishop Carrillo of Toledo, for example, was the son of Lope Vázquez de Acuña and nephew of Cardinal Carrillo de Albornoz who in turn had been closely related to Pedro de Luna, archbishop of Toledo, and also to Benedict XIII. He was also the brother of Pedro de Acuña, count of Buendía, and the uncle of Luis de Acuña, bishop of Segovia and Burgos, and of Pedro Girón, master of the order of Calatrava. Such examples could be repeated endlessly.

Many of these men also conformed to the pattern of what might be regarded as the typical Castilian bishop of the later middle ages. These were bishops who were aristocratic, politically minded, not very well grounded in ecclesiastical matters, lovers of luxury, and formidable opponents on the battlefield. Pulgar, for example, describes Archbishop Carrillo in the following terms:¹

He /

¹ Claros Varones, pp.118-9.

He was a bellicose man and, in accordance with this disposition, he liked always to have with him men at arms, and to be involved in wars and assemblies of armies. He was obstinate in his opinions and would pursue them, even though the obstacles involved were pointed out to him ... which in his time resulted in some wars in the kingdom with campaigns, battles, skirmishes and other feats of arms.

He was a tireless worker in matters related to war and, just as he was loved by some for being frank so he was disliked by many for this bellicosity in a man of religion ... He always tried to have great wealth, not in order to amass treasure but to be able to give and distribute largesse, and this desire led him to study the art of alchemy for many years ...

Carillo was an outstanding example of the aristocratic and warrior prelate. Other noble prelates, however, were stamped with the same qualities. Gutierre Alvarez de Toledo, bishop of Palencia, archbishop of Seville, and archbishop of Toledo 'appeared in his speech and manners to be more like a knight than a prelate'.¹ Juan García Manrique, archbishop of Santiago, 'was not a letrado but he was a very frank man of great estate and had many great relatives'.² That such bishops should have existed is scarcely surprising, given the pressure that the nobility brought to bear on the royal control of ecclesiastical patronage.³

It /

1 Generaciones, p.103.

2 Ibid., p.51.

3 This was especially true when pressure led to the election of a minor as in the case of Bishop Gonzalo de Zúñiga: González Palencia, ubi supra, pp.22-39.

It would be misleading, however, to assume that these warrior prelates were characteristic of the episcopate. Inevitably the warrior prelates seem to dominate the Church and ecclesiastical politics. Yet this impression is derived from chroniclers whose primary purpose was to describe political issues and events. A rigid classification of the Castilian hierarchy is, of course, impossible since any categories inevitably overlap with each other. Nevertheless, a discussion of the academic background of prelates and their work in royal administration will serve to produce a more balanced picture.

The link between ecclesiastics and royal administration was strong. Indeed the interplay was so marked that it is impossible to ascertain exactly how many royal servants were rewarded for their services by bishoprics.¹ It is, for example, extremely difficult to assess the reasons for the promotion to a bishopric of a man who was both an archdeacon and a royal judge. The number of cases of promotions to the episcopacy which can definitely be ascribed to service in the royal administration seems small - probably less than half a dozen bishops from 1390 to /

¹ The same applies to those below episcopal status. The archdeacons of Salves and Calatrava and the dean of Santiago, for example, are to be found as oidores in the audiencia: R.A.H., S.y C., 9/838 (M-31), fols.78V-84R; Cortes, iii.12(1,1419).

to 1474.¹ To this number must be added bishoprics given to members of families of civil servants. Two examples of this kind are outstanding. Diego Arias de Avila, contador mayor to Henry IV, managed to obtain the bishopric of Avila for his son, Juan Arias.² This, beyond all doubt, reflected the political dominance which the father had created for himself in all branches of the royal administration. The other case of promotion was probably even more significant. One of the administrative dynasties which established themselves in royal government throughout the fifteenth century was the Ulloa family. At the beginning of the century Pero Yáñez de Ulloa was one of the key officials of Henry III's administration. At the end of the century Rodrigo de Ulloa was to be the chief financial official of the Catholic sovereigns. By mid century one of the family had been given the bishopric of Avila and later became archbishop of Seville, although as a prelate he assumed the more noble maternal name of Fonseca.³

Civil /

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- 1 Martín Fernández de Vilches, canon of Toledo and Jaén, was Henry IV's secretary and chancellor before gaining the see of Avila. Vicente Arias, archdeacon of Toledo, worked in the audiencia before becoming bishop of Plasencia. Gonzalo de Illescas, prior of Guadalupe and royal confessor, clearly owed his see to his service under John II. Fortun Velásquez de Cuéllar was awarded a bishopric after years of work in the royal administration. See A.H.N., Clero, Pergs, carp. 1153, doc. 20; A.D.M., Sant., leg. 5, doc. 23; R.A.H., S.y.C., 9/838 (M-31), fols. 78V-84R; B.N., MS. 13031, fols. 55V, 57V; Generaciones, p. 58; Cortes, iii. 12 (1, 1419); C.D.R.A.H., 129 (xlviii, 1455).
 - 2 Garci Sánchez, p. 44; Tarsicio, Elección, p. 220.
 - 3 In Claros Varones, pp. 121-8 it is stated that he was the son of the letrado Juan Alfonso de Ulloa. This conforms to the family relationships given in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 11, fol. 270R where he appears as the uncle of Rodrigo de Ulloa.

Civil service prelates were not, therefore, unknown in Castile. Yet, so far, the discussion has been limited to civil servants who became prelates. If the general interplay between the royal service and the bishops is looked at, the connection becomes even stronger. Indeed it was the exception if a bishop did not play some part in royal government service.

In many cases it was no doubt conventional to regard prelates as being honorary members of royal government. The signatures of solemn diplomas, for example, clearly reveal the honorary nature of some administrative posts.¹ Sometimes the convention became firmly established tradition. The archbishop of Toledo, for example, invariably held the title of chancellor mayor of Castile.

The king's council presents the greatest difficulties in identifying episcopal royal servants since some were councillors because of their political importance and some merely held the title as an honour. Yet even with the council the civil service prelates can be discerned, as when the bishops of Ciudad Rodrigo and Lugo, along with one doctor and one clerk, formed a council to deal with routine administrative matters.²

It /

¹ For example, B.N., MS., 13029, fols. 10V-12V, 16 Feb. 1420, gives the bishop of Burgos as chancellor mayor de la reina, and the archbishop of Toledo as chancellor mayor of Castile.

² See C.D.R.A.H., 78-9 (xxxix, 1453).

It is easier to identify the judicial work of the Castilian prelates. Throughout the fifteenth century the supreme civil and criminal court of Castile was run largely by prelates.¹ A rough count reveals at least fifteen bishops who were judges in this court or audiencia.² Of these fifteen bishops at least five were presidents of the audiencia. Doubtless some of these prelates delegated the work to others. Nevertheless there is sufficient documentation to show that cases were actually tried before prelates acting as royal judges.³

The other branch of royal service where prelates played an outstanding role was diplomacy. Little needs to be said here on this point. Their participation in the church councils was supplemented by ambassadorial work for both papacy and monarchy. Don Francisco, bishop of Coria, for example, was a papal ambassador in France, Aragon, and Bohemia, as well as representing Henry IV at Rome.⁴ These men who entered the international scene contrasted sharply with the prelates who were intimate royal /

1 See F. Mendizábal, 'Investigaciones acerca ... de la real chancillería', R.A.B.M., xxx(1914), 61-72, 243-64, 437-52.

2 Vicente Arias, Alonso de Paradinas, García de Bahamonde, Gonzalo de Vivero, Gonzalo of Segovia, Pedro de Miranda, Alvaro de Isorna, Fernando de Luján, Alonso de Cartagena, Lope de Barrientos, Alfonso de Fonseca, Pedro de Castilla, Sancho de Rojas, of Córdoba, Gutierre Alvarez de Toledo, Fortún Velásquez de Cuéllar.

3 For examples of cases actually tried before episcopal oidores: B.N., MS., 13031, fols. 43R-75; R.A.H., S. y C., 9/838 (M-31), fols. 78V-84R; A.D.M., Priego, leg. 84, doc. 4; ibid, Sant., leg. 5, doc. 23.

4 Claros Carones, pp. 125-33.

royal confidants at court. Alonso de Palenzuela, bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo, who was Henry IV's ambassador to the English court in 1471, never seems to have been a member of the royal council or to have held any job in the royal administration.¹ Indeed, as far as the papal court is concerned, the royal representative often seems merely to have been chosen from the Castilians residing permanently in Rome.² This was in vivid contrast to men like Gonzalo de Illescas and Lope de Barrientos who were important in the royal administration because of their influence as royal confessors.

It was no accident that bishops played such an important role in royal justice and diplomacy, and not, for example, in finance. These activities called, not for bishops as such, but for jurists.³ This in itself reflects something of the educational standards of the episcopacy.

It is easy to match examples of warrior prelates with others who enjoyed an international reputation for their brilliance and learning. Cardinals Juan de Carvajal and Juan de Torquemada, and Bishops Pablo de Santa /

1 Mem. Divs. Habs., p.199. Countless other examples in political histories of the period.

2 From the congress of Siena in 1460 until his death in 1470, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo settled in Rome and acted as resident procurator for the Castilian monarchy: Trame, op.cit., pp.103,195.

3 Ibid., p.9.

Santa María, Alfonso de Cartagena, and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo are outstanding examples.¹ Nevertheless it is more significant to look not at the outstanding exceptions but at the episcopacy as a whole. Although all the matriculation records of Salamanca university are lacking for the fifteenth century,² it is still possible to draw up a rough list of the number of academics in the episcopate. Such a count reveals that over twenty bishops were university men. The majority of these bishops were products of Salamanca, some held degrees but cannot be identified with any particular university, and a few, like don Francisco, bishop of Coria, had studied at foreign universities. At least three professors are included in this group.³

The /

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- 1 There are lengthy studies on the Santa Marías which throw a flood of light on Castilian history; L. Serrano, Los conversos don Pablo de Santa María y don Alfonso de Cartagena (Madrid, 1952); F. Cantera Burgos, Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos (Madrid, 1952).
 - 2 L. Gómez Canedo, Don Juan de Carvajal (Madrid, 1947), p. 34 note 13.
 - 3 Products of Salamanca: Juan Arias Dávila, Gutierre Álvarez de Toledo, Lope de Barrientos (professor of theology), Tello de Buendía, Alonso de Cartagena, Juan de Carvajal, Alonso de Madrigal (professor of theology and philosophy), Juan de Mella, Alonso de Paradinas, Gonzalo de Santa María (professor), Juan de Torquemada, Rodrigo de Vergara. Products of other or unknown universities: Francisco of Coria, Vicente Arias, Juan Díaz de Coca, Diego Fernández de Illescas, Juan González, Gonzalo González de Bustamante, Juan de Illescas, Lope de Mendoza, Alonso de Palenzuela, Fernan Lopez del Orden, Pedro Tenorio. Since the list is certainly incomplete the wide range of references to these men and their degrees is not given.

The number of academics and administrators may seem surprisingly high when related to the grim picture usually given of the Castilian Church in the later middle ages. In fact a substantial change in the character of the episcopacy did take place in the fifteenth century, due, primarily, to changes in educational opportunities. There can be no doubt that many academics were men of law but some were theologians. The group of over twenty prelates contrasts strongly with the argument that 'not a single doctor of theology is heard of from Salamanca until 1355'. Until the late fourteenth century Salamanca was a complete backwater and it was precisely for this reason that Cardinal Gil de Albornoz founded the Spanish college at Bologna in 1365.¹

The turning point came in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. Theology became fully established at Salamanca by the last decade of the fourteenth century and, although Clement VI had expressly excluded theology when he approved the foundation of Valladolid University in 1346, Henry III founded a chair in theology in 1404 which was confirmed by Martin V in 1418. These developments were accompanied by the foundation of colleges /

¹ Trame, op.cit., p.9. But see also F.Martín Hernández, La formación clerical en los colegios universitarios españoles (Vitoria, 1961), pp.4-23.

colleges which were open to poor students. The most famous of these colleges, the Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé, was founded by Diego de Anaya y Maldonado, subsequently archbishop of Seville, in the early fifteenth century. It was a college which was to prove a veritable power house in producing able prelates. These developments were late in appearing in Castile. Yet they proved to be a turning point leading to further foundations of colleges and providing the Castilian monarchs, including the Catholic sovereigns, with the letrados who were to improve the calibre of the episcopate.¹

Nor were these changes purely accidental. The papacy, it has been argued, deliberately encouraged theological studies in Castile to counteract the conciliarism of Paris and it is certainly true that Castilians provided much of the support for the papal position.² It would also seem that the period of the Schism and the councils had an effect by throwing together the international intelligentsia. It was on his return from Constance, for example, that Archbishop Anaya decided definitively /

1 The Colegio de Pan y Carbón, founded in 1386, predated the Colegio de San Bartolomé. The latter was begun by Anaya in 1401 and confirmed by Benedict XIII in 1414 and Martin V in 1418. Martín Hernández, op.cit., pp. xxi-lxx and 4-23; Tarsicio, Elección, pp. 225-6; J. Goñi Gastambide, 'Recompensas de Martín V a sus electores españoles', H. Sacra, ii (1958), 273-6, 288-91.

2 Trame, op.cit., p. 9.

definitively to set up the college of San Bartolomé.¹ But the Crown played the decisive role by promoting academics to bishoprics. It has already been argued that the nobility were influenced by the fact that the royal court became a centre of learning.² The court also influenced the Church. Alfonso de Madrigal, professor at Salamanca, for example, was brought to court by John II, made a member of the royal council, and rewarded with the bishopric of Avila. Similarly it was another professor and bishop, originally drafted to court as tutor to Prince Henry, who virtually took charge of royal government after the execution of Alvaro de Luna.³ Royal interest had practical results.⁴

The effect of these trends was to increase the number of academic prelates. There was also a subsequent decline in some of the worst abuses. Bishops like /

1 See Goñi Gaztambide, ubi supra, pp.259-97 which shows the extent to which the Castilian embassy at Constance was preoccupied with improving centres of learning. It was this embassy which obtained Martin V's blessing for a faculty of theology at Valladolid, previously denied by Clement VI. The first dean, Luis de Valladolid, was himself one of the ambassadors. The importance of such developments can be gauged by noting the parochial atmosphere in Salamanca in the late fourteenth century: Goñi Gaztambide, 'Tres rótulos de la universidad', A.A., xi(1963), 227-317; the same, 'Un rótulo de la universidad', A.A., xii(1964), 283-92.

2 See above pp.202-4.

3 A useful portrait of Alfonso de Madrigal in Claros Varones, pp.134-7. On Barrientos see Carriazo's introduction to Ref. Halconero, pp.cxxxiii-clv.

4 The practical results have been deliberately stressed. John II's general interest in religious learning and in Greek and Latin texts is well attested. See, for example, Claros Varones, p.137 and Cantera Burgos, op.cit., pp.458-9.

like Alfonso de Madrigal, Tello de Buendía, and the observant Franciscan, Alonso de Palenzuela, were exemplary prelates.¹ It is not surprising to find that Alfonso de Madrigal's rather puritanical ideas on the characteristics needed in bishops gained considerable acceptance towards the end of the period.²

Changes in the quality of the episcopate were accompanied to a certain extent by a revival in monastic life. Two important aspects about this revival merit brief treatment.

The first aspect concerns the nature of this revival. As far as the old orders were concerned reform took the nature of observance. The Benedictine observant movement began in 1390 when monks from Sahagún under Antonio de Ceynos moved to Valladolid. From 1420 onwards the Valladolid observants began to make important conquests in the older foundations of Castile - San Claudio in León (1420), Sahagún (1427), and Oña (1454) were important stages in this process of assimilation.³ A similar observant movement in the Cistercian order, directed by Martín de Vargas, began to take effect from 1427 onwards.⁴ The movement /

1 See Claros Varones, pp.134-40 and Mem.Divs.Hazs, p.52.

2 Tarsicio, Elección, pp.230-3.

3 Tarsicio, Isabel, pp.567-8; Pérez de Urbel, op.cit., ii.600-601; Santos Díez, op.cit., pp.173-4.

4 Pérez de Urbel, op.cit., ii.p.601.

movement of observance among the Dominicans had antecedents in the early fifteenth century - for example, in the work of Alvaro de Córdoba in Córdoba - but received its main impulse from the activity of Cardinal Torquemada who succeeded from 1460 onwards in establishing the centre of the observant movement in the convent of San Pablo in Valladolid.¹ Finally, the Franciscans, as might be expected, were subject to more than one movement of observance. For a long time splinter movements, deriving from the work of men like Pedro de Villacreces and Lope de Salazar, refused to identify themselves with the main body of observants but, by 1466, the movements had fused into one general movement.² These movements towards observance no doubt helped to improve standards among monks and friars.

At the same time the Carthusians and Jeronimites were responsible for a new, if minor, wave of monasticism from the late fourteenth century onwards. The first Carthusian monastery to be founded in Castile was that of El Paular and, by the end of the fifteenth century, there were still less than half a dozen foundations in Castile. The Jeronimites started earlier and enjoyed greater success, probably due to a greater backing from the Crown and the nobility /

1 Tarsicio, Isabel, pp.568-9.

2 Ibid, pp.569-71.

nobility. Guadalupe, for example, was especially¹ favoured with donations by the Crown and nobility.

The second aspect to be mentioned concerns the nature of the reorganization that took place. There seems little doubt that the result was to free Castilian religious orders from foreign control and create a large measure of centralisation within the kingdom. Such a result seems to have been actively encouraged by the monarchy. It is not improbable that John II desired an autonomous organization of the Castilian orders. Not only did the Crown support any activity designed to end dependence abroad but it also actively intervened to prevent disintegration of the new movements, as when, in 1457, the king's council stepped in to help the main body of Franciscan observants against Lope de Salazar.² By the late fifteenth century the Benedictine monasteries had been centralized into a dependence /

1 Pérez de Urbel, op.cit., ii.597-8.

2 For the action of the royal council see Tarsicio, Isabel, p.570. The Crown's interest in the new movements was apparent from the very start. The future centre of Benedictine monasticism in Castile, the monastery of San Benito, was begun by John I in 1388 by converting the royal palace in Valladolid into a monastery. Subsequently both Henry III and John II supported the movement to centralisation of dependence on this monastery. See, in general, P.Schmitz, Histoire de l'ordre de Saint-Benoît (Liège, 1948), iii. chap.v and the detailed example in which the monastery of San Juan of Burgos had its dependence on the French house of Cassa Dei replaced by San Benito, in Cantera Burgos, op.cit., pp.127-32.

dependence on Valladolid and similar developments had taken place with the Cistercians, Dominicans, and Franciscans. The general chapter of the Cistercians saw in this independence the makings of a schism.¹ In fact a further step was being taken towards a national Church.

¹ Fliche and Martin, Histoire de l'église, xiv.1060.

THE MILITARY ORDERS

It has been noted that, juridically, the military orders formed a part of the first estate.¹ In the fifteenth century, the same formulae of a religious nature continued to be applied to the orders as in previous centuries. The acts of the general chapter of Santiago of 1440, for example, are full of detailed regulations on the religious obligations of the members of the order.² Procedure, ceremony, and elections were still theoretically governed by canon law. The abbots of Cîteaux and Morimond continued to confirm elections to the mastership of Calatrava.³ Occasionally, mainly for political reasons, it was useful to stress the religious character of the orders.⁴

The reality differed sharply from the theory. While the military orders jealously refused to allow other religious orders into the areas which they controlled, they themselves /

1 See above p. 209.

2 The acts of the general chapter are in B.N., MS., 833. Folios 8R, 12R-16V, 27V-28V, 33V-35V, 38R-45R, 49R or V, 53V-57R, 65V-106R contain regulations on such matters as religious ceremonies, confession, communion, fasting, marriage and concubinage, dress, non-residence, visitations, and spiritual duties affecting the general population on the order's lands.

3 F.R. de Uhagón, Ordenes militares (Madrid, 1898), pp. 53-5, 62-3 gives data on such confirmations.

4 It is clear, for example, that the true purpose of the chapter meeting of Santiago in 1440 was to prepare an offensive against Alvaro de Luna. The meeting allowed the master, the Infante Enrique, to dwell at length on Luna's uncanonical interventions in the affairs of the order: B.N., MS., 833, fols. 18V-24V.

themselves completely failed to fill the monastic vacuum.¹ The one rule that was destined to be of great importance was the one that reserved membership of the orders to men of hidalgo status.²

1) The Wealth of the Military Orders

The military orders have rightly been regarded as powerful and wealthy groupings within Spanish society. Where was this wealth derived from? Fortunately some detailed accounts of the income of the order of Santiago survive in the archive of Simancas.³ The accounts only refer to income from the provincia of León - an area mainly situated in the region of Extremadura and bounded by the kingdom of Portugal and the modern provinces of Córdoba and Seville. The figures from these accounts have been reduced to a small and comprehensible pattern which is presented in Tables XVII - XIX.⁴ This information refers to the income and expenditure of the mesa maestral. Again, fortunately, the only good study on the /

1 Ibid, fol.60R and V: 'Que de aquí adelante non aya monesterio nin hermitario de freyres en nuestra orden nin de otra religion alguna salvo la nuestra'.

2 Ibid, fol.50V: 'Que el maestre non pueda recebir nin dar el habito de nuestra orden a ninguno salvo que sea hijodalgo e primeramente caballero'. See also L.P.

Wright, 'The military orders in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish society', P.P., no.43 (May, 1969), 34-70.

3 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.13 (antiguo legajo 18¹ and ²) contains some 200 folios of accounts and tax farms which are not arranged in any logical order.

4 Appendices R, S, and T, below pp. 589-92.

the military orders in the fifteenth century deals with the same province, uses other sources of documentation, and bases its approach not from the point of view of the mesa maestra, but of the encomiendas and town councils.¹ It is, therefore, possible to generalize on the basis of detailed evidence on almost all aspects of one of the provinces of the military orders. Whenever possible these generalizations are supplemented by examples from other areas which tend to strengthen the assumption that the generalizations will prove valid for the other provinces when more studies are available.

1) Formal lordship

By the fifteenth century it is difficult to identify even the formal lordship of the military orders. Technically the military orders as corporate bodies held lordship and jurisdiction over the lands under their control. Comendadores and castellans (alcaldes) were bound to the masters of the orders by homage, and military service to the Crown depended on permission being granted by the masters.² The formulae of formal lordships also still continued /

1 M. Góngora, 'Régimen señorial y rural en la Extremadura de la orden de Santiago en el momento de la emigración a Indias', Jb.f.G.Lateinamerikas, ii(1965), 1-29. This article covers the period 1480-1520 and hence provides a certain degree of continuity to the Simancas accounts. The study is based on the acts of chapters and records of visitations. See also the very general article, H. Mota Arévalo, 'La orden de Santiago en tierras de Extremadura', R.E.E., xviii(1962), 5-76.

2 Uhagón, op.cit., pp.79-80 prints the homage of the alcaide of Belmez to the master of Calatrava. The necessity for permission to obey a royal summons: actas of 1440, B.N., MS., 833, fols.41V-42R.

continued to be used. John II, for example, approved the exchange of Halarilla (belonging to Rodrigo de Guzmán) with the Calatrava area of La Higuera de Andújar con su torre e castillo e vasallos e terminos e jurediccion civil e criminal alta e baxa e mero e mixto inperio.¹

Yet in reality there was a complicated pattern of lordships all over the lands of the orders. The formal lordship of the corporate mesa maestra shared power with the individual lordships of comendadores and alcaldes which, after 1310, were held for life, enjoyed seigniorial rights, and owed military service of lanzas to the order.² The pattern of lordships and the relationships between masters and comendadores did indeed bear striking resemblances to the relationship between the royal supreme lordship and the lordships granted by the Crown to the nobility.

Detailed evidence on the value of juridical lordship as a source of wealth once again shows that it was of little value. In the provincia of León in 1466, for example, income deriving from taxes inherent in lordship - martiniegas, lievas and yantares, pedidos - only accounted for 4.66% of total income. Even if such revenues as the escribanía /

1 A.H.N., Cal., Sec.dip., reales, leg.4, doc.244, 3 June 1434.

2 M. Góngora, ubi supra, p.4.

escribanía, portazgo, and taxes on Jews and Moors are regarded as being inherent to lordship, the total still only comes to 10.26% (Table XVIII).¹

As with the lordships of the nobility the evidence shows that formal lordship over land was not profitable unless supplemented by income from other sources. Once again a mere catalogue of lands included in the lordship is in itself insufficient evidence of great wealth. Indeed contemporary evidence shows that the military orders, as well as the nobility, had begun to disregard the juridical formulae of lordship and concentrate on careful assessments of cash value.²

ii) Agrarian income

There is no evidence of any demesne farming by the military orders. In all probability labour services had been commuted into cash payments during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A document of 1428, for example, shows that peasantry on some of the Calatrava lands had to make annual payments in cash in lieu of labour services from /

¹ Appendix S, below p. 591

² See, for example, the transaction, involving lordships and assignments, between the order of Alcántara and Alfonso Pérez de Vivero which is contained in John II's confirmation in A.D.M., Vill., leg. 1, doc. 12, 20 Nov. 1449.

from peasantry 'who were in former times obliged to go and harvest the grain of the campo of Calatrava'.¹

The lack of demesne exploitation is not surprising. On the other hand it is surprising to note how low the income from rents and censuses was in the provincia of León. Rents and censuses accounted for a mere 0.14% of total income in 1466. To this must be added the rents from the dehesas or pasture grounds which provided 11.88% of total income (Table XVIII).² By any standards the figures are low, especially the non-pastoral rents and censuses, and the reasons for this should be briefly discussed.

The extremely low sums derived from censuses and rents may be partly explained by the small number of leases entailed for such a wide area as the provincia of León. Land being held by the comendadores, the censuses and rents went to them rather than to the mesa maestral.³ Nevertheless the documentation also shows that the annual payments by tenants was in many cases extremely low, as can be seen by giving a breakdown of the leases in Llerena. Here some vineyards rendered as much as 500 mrs per year but of the total of twenty leases as many as sixteen each brought in as /

1 A.H.N., Cal., Sec. dip., parts., leg. 3, doc. 307, 10 May 1428. By this agreement the village of Illana had to pay 1,640 mrs per year in lieu of labour services.

2 Appendix S, below p. 591

3 In the accounts for 1464, for example, less than fifty leases (not including dehesas) are given for the whole provincia: A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 13, fols. 151V-152R.

as little as 100 mrs or less per year. The low sums involved can in turn be explained by the emphyteutical leases granted to the tenants. In effect this meant the perpetual alienation of the usufruct of land by the order. The tenant enjoyed tenure as long as he continued to pay the original yearly payment stipulated. Confirmation of terms of leases only occurred when the tenant died or when he sold the land. It is true that quo warranto investigations into leases were carried out during the visitations but these aimed not at substituting short term leases in place of the existing leases but merely to ensure that the ultimate lordship of the order was recognised. Hence although rent payments rose - on the death of a tenant, the sale of the land, failure to produce proper documents during the visitations - the rise was gradual and the real value of the leases fell sharply.¹

The large pasture grounds or dehesas do not appear to have been directly exploited by the order in the provincia of León. The fact that they accounted for almost 12% of total income in 1466 is explained by two important reasons. In the first place the documentation clearly shows the importance of the dehesas in the general ranching activities of the region. It seems probable that throughout the /

1 Ibid and M.Góngora, ubi supra, pp.17-18.

the fifteenth century an enclosure movement was gathering strength on all the lands controlled by the military orders and the dehesas became increasingly important. This tendency was not necessarily due to increased activity on the part of the Mesta, although the signs are not altogether lacking. As early as 1417, for example, the order of Calatrava was setting up sheep walks in its lands in return for Mesta subsidies and trying to break down the resistance of the villages affected. More important than the Mesta was the great increase in local ranching and enclosures.¹ The second point explaining the profitability of the dehesas concerns the nature of their exploitation by the orders. There is no evidence of dehesas being leased by emphyteusis. On the contrary they were treated as another form of taxation resource and were farmed out for short periods of time to the highest bidder.² Short term stability in dehesa income was, therefore, open to increases according to the demand of the ranching interest. In 1466, for example, the most profitable grazing grounds were Covillana (150,000 mrs per year), and Campo (100,000 mrs per year).³ By the end of the century both these dehesas were /

1 A.H.N., Cal., Sec. dip., parts., leg. 3, doc. 297, 20 Dec. 1417, shows that the order had agreed to a sheep walk through the Zorita area, in return for 'cierto tributo anual' from the Mesta, and was now attempting to alleviate fiscality in Fuentelencina in order to break down local resistance. For general comments on the Mesta in Extremadura see M. Góngora, ubi supra, pp. 8-10.

2 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 13, passim.

3 Ibid, fols. 33R-35V.

were each producing 260,000 mrs per year.¹ In general terms the elasticity of this income can best be noted by the fact that, whereas in the 1460s tithes provided more income than the dehesas (Tables XVII-XVIII), by the end of the fifteenth century the situation had been reversed and the dehesas obviously constituted, after the alcabalas, the main source of income.²

Despite future developments it must, however, again be stressed that income accruing from agricultural exploitation was extremely low. Given the complete lack of demesne exploitation and the nature of the leases, it is not surprising that encroachments and usurpations of lands were revealed during visitations. In Jerez de los Caballeros the dehesas of the master of Santiago were found to be occupied by inhabitants and strangers with the tacit consent of the town council (1498). In 1494 the visitors found that a substantial area of the dehesa of Pizarral had been colonised and cultivated to the detriment of the order's revenues from the farmer.³ To a certain extent such examples can be explained in terms of a clash over enclosures. Neglect and lack of direct interest by the /

1 M. Góngora, ubi supra, p.9. Góngora's view of the stability of dehesa income is probably valid for the period when price inflation was halted.

2 M. Góngora, ubi supra, p.6 and Appendices R and S, below 581-91

3 M. Góngora, ubi supra, p.14.

the military order are more convincing reasons. As early as 1440 the general chapter of the order of Santiago was trying to prevent these losses by ordering the centralisation of all relevant documentation in the convent of Uclés. Only effective visitations, however, could hope to improve matters.¹

iii) Spiritual income

The tables and map clearly demonstrate the importance of tithes as a source of revenue. In 1466 cash payments of tithes in the provincia of León accounted for 15.22% of total income. To this must be added almost all the 37,679 fanegas of grain (Table XVIII).² Apart from the alcabalas, tithes were the greatest revenue raiser. How did this situation arise? The military orders were theoretically justified in receiving the proceeds of the tithes and, in addition, the levying of tithes seems to have been particularly efficient.

Papal privileges exempted the military orders from paying tithes to bishops. Furthermore both in Castile and Aragon, from the twelfth century onwards, the tithes of reconquered areas were granted to the orders.³ To a certain /

¹ Actas of 1440, B.N., MS., 833, fols. 45V-46R.

² Appendix S, below p. 591

³ M. Góngora, ubi supra, pp. 6-7.

certain extent the payment of tithes to the military orders was still justified on religious grounds in the fifteenth century. Tithes were theoretically destined for the repair and upkeep of the churches throughout the lands of the orders. Thus, for example, letters of the master of Calatrava in 1416 and 1424 reminded comendadores and alcaldes of their obligation to pay tithes to the sacristan of the convent of Calatrava in order to provide for vestments, ornaments, and building repairs.¹ The accounts for the provincia of León, however, show that income from tithes was paid to the order along with the other sources of income and was not specifically set aside for expenditure of a religious nature. In the accounts of expenditure some sums were set aside for the repair of specific churches - but they were small sums of money and came nowhere near to balancing the income from tithes. (Table XIX).²

Tithes seemed to have been levied on everything. Predial, personal, mixed, and small tithes covered all items from grain down to slates and bricks.³ Invariably the tithes were farmed out so that, although apparently tithing was fairly accurate at a local level, the general figures available are not useful indices of production. Nevertheless the general importance of the various activities /

1 A.H.N., Cal., Sec. dip., parts., leg. 3, docs. 291 and 301, dated 17 June 1416 and 9 Nov. 1424.

2 Assignments to churches and charity only amounted to 0.59% in 1467: see Appendix T, below p. 592.

3 Since many of the accounts are presented area by area examples occur throughout.

activities in the provincia of León emerges clearly. Tithes on livestock brought in large sums of money. If the area of Montemolín is taken as an example, the accounts of the years 1460, 1464, and 1467, show that almost 75% of the income from tithes (not including grain tithes paid in kind) was derived from livestock and wool.¹ The importance of tithes in the fiscal structure of the provincia of León does not appear to have been exceptional. An account surviving for the village of Liétor in the provincia of Castile (1458) shows the local financial official accounting for tithes on honey, wax, wool, lambs, cheese, and chickens, along with other revenues such as the portazgo, and revenues from the local mill.²

iv) The Crown as a source of wealth

The accounts of the provincia of León show the overwhelming importance of the Crown as a source of income. Even if the one tax which was indubitably a royal tax - the alcabala - is considered, it appears that the Crown provided roughly half the total income. In 1462 alcabalas provided over 50% of the income from the provincia and in 1466 /

1 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.13, fols.148R, 171V-172R, 158R. An exact calculation is impossible since allowance has to be made for compound tithe farms - wool, for example, was sometimes farmed with cheese.

2 A.D.M., Med., leg.309, doc.35, accounts of Juan Sánchez de Ribera for the year ending 20 May 1458.

1466 they produced 52.23% of the total (Tables XVII and XVIII).¹

There is no evidence to show that the alcabalas were granted to the order by royal privilege. Moreover, a royal privilege alienating this 'inalienable' tax to such a massive extent would certainly not escape detection. It is therefore, valid to assume that this royal income was usurped. Clearly such a usurpation would be aided by political events in Castile. In 1465 the puppet king, Alfonso XII, was put forward as a pretender to the throne after the mock deposition of Henry IV at Avila. The order of Santiago at this point was controlled by Rodrigo de Pimentel who was also one of the group of nobles who governed in the name of the boy-king, Alfonso. Hence, from 1465, Pimentel was in fact controlling both the Crown and the order of Santiago and the usurpation of the alcabalas, perhaps, provided no real clash of interests. Yet political events only partly help to explain the situation. The accounts clearly show that the alcabalas were being usurped in the early 1460s.² It did not take a civil war to make the nobility realize that income could be doubled by /

1 So important were the alcabalas that the contribution of other major taxes could not have been depicted on the map without deliberately using a scale which exaggerates their importance. For the tables see Appendices R and S below pp. 589-91

2 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 13 contains accounts from 1460 onwards.

by gaining control of the alcabalas.¹

Many other small taxes provided revenues for the order of Santiago from the provincia of León. Some of these were too insignificant to merit discussion. One group of taxes, however, deserves attention - those designated as mixed customs taxes in Table XVIII and providing 5.58% of total income in 1466. In some cases these were taxes which would almost certainly be peculiar to this particular provincia and would not necessarily be found in other areas under the control of military orders. The customs post at Jerez, for example, clearly owed its existence to the proximity of Portugal, as perhaps did the control of grain movements at Fuente del Maestre. The other point worth underlining is that only five taxes were involved and that consequently the figures in each case were substantial. The customs post at Jerez, for example, was worth 40,000 mrs per year. It need hardly be stressed that this latter tax was not included in the juridical framework of lordship but was a tax which technically belonged to the Crown and could only be alienated by special privilege.²

2) /

1 As early as 1409, for example, the Crown placed an embargo on the inheritance of the master of Santiago because of usurpations of royal revenues in Santiago lands: A.D.M., FERIA, leg.55, doc.22, 8 Oct.1409.

2 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.13, passim.

2) Patterns of Wealth

The accounts of the expenditure of the order of Santiago in 1467 serve as a useful guide to income distribution within the order. A brief analysis of these complicated accounts presents a fairly clear picture of the various headings of expenditure which can be deduced from the documentation (Table XIX).¹ It must be stressed, however, that such an analysis only serves as a rough guide and that the following discussion will cut across the lines of the statistical analysis.

The most striking feature is the wealth and power of don Rodrigo de Pimentel, who controlled the order during this period. Control of a military order in this case meant that the provincia of León provided Pimentel with 2,500,000 mrs (41.46% of the total). This money was paid to him in cash, was not accounted for in detail, and was used to finance his political and military power.² These sums of money, paid directly to Pimentel, did not, however, constitute his only source of power. All the remaining expenditure was in his control since assignments were only issued on his authorisation. Thus all expenditure on charity, gifts, privileges, and salaries was no doubt generally /

1 Appendix T below p.592.

2 Apart from the 1,900,000 mrs used for troops and officials Pimentel could also dispose of the military service owed by all comendadores to the order and the assignments paid out for lanzas.

generally seen to issue from his power and largesse. The wealth belonged to the order but the control of the machinery of patronage was in Pimentel's hands. Two illustrations will serve to indicate this power of control.

In the first place there were the disbursements made por el rey - on behalf of the king. Don Gabriel Manrique, count of Osorno, for example, was given 261,000 mrs 'for the other 261,000 mrs which the king assigned to him on the alcabalas of certain places in the provincia'.¹ Apparently, therefore, it would seem that royal control of the alcabalas still existed and this is supported by the fact that 9.78% of the total income was spent in this way. The reality was completely different. Quite apart from the fact that alcabalas provided over 50% of total income and assignments por el rey only accounted for 9.78%, the documentation shows that royal control was entirely fictional. Each royal assignment had to be confirmed and authorised by Pimentel.² Indeed the facade of royal intervention is open to even more damning interpretations. It is not conceivable that any real royal will can be discerned in this intervention since the king, Alfonso XII, was a boy.

Two /

1 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.13, fol.132R.

2 The count of Osorno's libramiento in fact was cancelled later by Pimentel. See the Relacion delas personas quel sennor conde mande que non se pagase las mercedes que de su sennoria tenian, ibid, fols.122R-123V.

Two explanations are likely - Pimentel desired to maintain a facade of royal approval for usurpation of the alcabalas, or he may well have cloaked some of his actions in this way because Alfonso XII had been designated master of Santiago by John II and Pimentel was merely the administrador.¹

The other example of Pimentel's control of the assignments of the mesa maestral concerns the nature of some of the mercedes in the accounts. Over mercedes granted for life Pimentel would have little control, and some of the holders of these clearly pre-dated Pimentel's advent to power. Yet, another group of mercedes was entirely dependent on Pimentel's yearly approval - the mercedes en cada ano en quanto su voluntad fuere. In 1467 many of these mercedes were, in fact, cancelled by ^{the} specific order of Pimentel.

The power and wealth of Pimentel emerges clearly but that of the other members of the military order emerges less clearly. The accounts often name the recipients of assignments but in many cases the social status of the recipient cannot be assessed. Broadly speaking the following categories of recipient appear in the accounts - comendadores, alcaldes, caballeros, towns and townsmen, lawyers, and priests. Clearly not all these people were members /

¹ See Tarsicio, Isabel, p.81 and C.D.R.A.H., 339(c1,1464), 341(cii,1464).

members of the order and in many cases the assignments are for amounts so low in value that they can be ignored. As far as the order itself is concerned, discussion can usefully be limited to the first three categories mentioned.

The lands of the military orders were shared by the master, comendadores, churches, and councils of villages and towns.¹ The accounts of the mesa maestral do not, therefore, indicate the sources of wealth of the encomiendas which were lordships within the general lordship of the order. Alcaides and comendadores thus received two general types of revenue - income from lordship, details of which are not given in the accounts of the mesa, and additional income derived from the mesa maestral itself.

It is probable that income derived from lordship and land was more important in the case of the encomiendas than was the case with the income of the mesa maestral. Indeed the unimportance of these sources of revenue in the accounts of the mesa is almost certainly to be explained in terms of control at the local level by the comendadores. There is, however, no evidence for the existence of demesne exploitation in the encomiendas. All income from agricultural exploitation came from rents and censuses from ephyteutical leases of land. There is no evidence on the type of farms applying in the dehesas controlled by the comendadores /

1 M. Góngora, ubi supra, pp.5-7.

comendadores.¹

The value of the encomienda was increased by revenues held by the comendador which normally went to the order. Thus accounts of income in 1460, for example, give entries such as 'half the wine revenue of Guadalcanal, the other half belonging to the comendador, 40,000 mrs.' Clearly the full value of the revenue was 80,000 mrs and the accounts do not enter the full amount under income and consequently do not account for the full amount under expenditure.² More often, however, the full amounts involved are dealt with in the accounts and appear as mercedes under expenditure. Occasionally assessments were made which covered all the alienations which officials could discover and rough summaries were drawn up. These three different methods of assessment present serious problems in trying to determine the value of the encomiendas. Clearly the value of these latter varied from one encomienda to another and also from the point of view of the order and the comendador. The analysis of expenditure (Table XIX), therefore, is not a good indication of the comendadores' wealth, both because it does not take into /

1 Ibid, pp.5,13-14. Widespread leases of lands granted by the comendadores may have become generalised during the second half of the fourteenth century. In 1395 the master and order of Calatrava gave complete freedom to all the comendadores to lease the lands of their encomiendas as they wished: A.H.N.,Cal.,Sec.dip., parts.,leg.2,doc.275, 6 June 1395.

2 A.G.S.,E.M.R.,leg.13,fol.171R.

into account all the revenues of the encomiendas and because mercedes held by the comendadores could derive from the 41.46% of the revenues directly controlled by Pimentel, the 9.78% granted por el rey, and the 22.16% of grants designated as mercedes in the accounts of assignments. In effect when officials worked out the problem from the point of view of the holders of mercedes, the figures were much higher. In 1466 mercedes totalled 3,478,250 mrs and in 1467, 3,369,000 mrs, although in the latter year Pimentel cancelled mercedes worth 1,151,000 mrs.¹

The bulk of these mercedes went to the comendadores of the order. It would be tedious to list these valuable privileges in detail. Instead a rough estimate of the value of encomiendas can be deduced for those cases where global figures are given because all revenues had been consolidated in the hands of the comendador.² The accounts show that the encomienda of Usagre was worth at least 70,000 mrs per year, the encomienda of Reina, 150,000 mrs, the encomienda of Montijo 20,000 mrs, the encomienda of Fuente de Cantos, 400,000 mrs, and the encomienda of Montánchez, 400,000 mrs. In short the comendadores /

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- 1 Calculations of mercedes for 1466 and 1467, ibid, fols. 31R-32V, 121R-123V. These figures cannot be compared to totals of income and expenditure since the accounts often failed to include permanent or semi-permanent mercedes.
- 2 These were the encomiendas where the comendador held (a) the income of the encomienda and (b) all the income derived by the mesa from his encomienda and regranted to him by mercedes.

comendadores of the order enjoyed very substantial incomes.¹

Not all mercedes were granted to comendadores and alcaldes. All recipients of mercedes in the accounts are given the generic name of caballeros. It is clear, however, that they were not all noblemen or even caballeros de hábito of the order of Santiago. These latter were knights of the order who held no land. They could, however, receive fief rents for military service and a substantial amount of Pimentel's 1,900,000 mrs must have been used for such payments.² Paid on the basis of 2,000 mrs per lance per year these assignments proved valuable additional income to members of the lesser nobility who had found a place on the pay roll of the order.³

3) Control and Quality

The elections of masters were generally influenced by the same factors affecting the elections of bishops. When Martin V recognised the validity of royal intervention in canonical /

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- 1 These figures clearly include revenues normally held by the comendador and not regarded as mesa income. Montánchez, for example, produced a total of 353,540 mrs in the mesa's accounts in 1466 of which 100,000 came from alcabalas. The calculations of mercedes included the same figure for the alcabalas but added new figures which were presumably those held by the alcaide on a permanent basis.
 - 2 Such payments would be in addition to the 9.07% already set aside for fief rents: see Appendix T, below p.592.
 - 3 Details of such payments in fols.131R-142V. The payments were made by area and to groups of men with no indication being given of social status.

canonical elections in the bull Sedis Apostolicae this papal concession included the elections of masters.¹

However, in the case of the military orders, religious and academic qualities were irrelevant. Control over the election of a master was a purely political problem. The chief political figures of Castilian fifteenth century history (or their immediate dependents) are all represented in the list of masters - Alvaro de Luna, the Infantes Enrique and Alfonso (brother and son of John II of Aragon and son and grandson of Ferdinand of Antequera), the Infante don Alfonso (brother of Henry IV and pretender to the throne), Beltrán de la Cueva, and Juan Pacheco. Control, therefore, is best seen in terms of political history and only two general points need be made here.

To be master of a military order meant the control of a formidable machine of patronage which could provide for younger sons and lesser nobility, and could also be used to build up a political party. Hence the attempts to pass military orders from father to son. The most striking case is probably that of Pedro de Girón, master of Calatrava. Towards the end of his career he not only almost /

1 Tarsicio, Elección, p.283. The royal argument on this point is succinctly expressed in C.D.R.A.H., 84-5 (xli, 1453). Intervention could, of course, mean armed force as in the election of the Infante Alfonso to the mastership of Calatrava: Uhagón, op.cit., pp.14-15.

almost gained the hand of the future Queen Isabella, but also managed to have his son elected master of Calatrava. The latter, don Rodrigo Téllez Girón, was only eight years old and a bastard. Both the Crown and the papacy granted the appropriate dispensations. Indeed the pope went further and provided for the reversion of the order to the father in the eventuality of the premature death of the new master. Clearly the possibilities of this type of situation posed a grave threat to the Crown.¹

It is not surprising, therefore, that royal intervention in the affairs of the military orders was stepped up during the century. Royal intervention in elections, recognised by the bull Sedis Apostolicae, was further strengthened by papal concessions granting the administration of orders to the Crown for considerable periods of time. Nicholas V, for example, granted the administration of Santiago to John II in 1453 for a period of seven years and Calixtus III granted the administration of both Santiago and Alcántara to Henry IV for periods of ten years.² These concessions were obviously part of a royal campaign to impose /

1 Pedro de Girón had at least three bastard children who were legitimised by Pius II and given mayorazgos with royal permission. After his son's election as master Pedro de Girón died almost immediately and the marriage arranged for Isabella fell through. See ibid, pp.22, 30-1, 62-3.

2 Tarsicio, Elección, p.283; Palanco Romero, op.cit., p.49; C.D.A.A.H., 113(xlvi, 1454).

impose effective control - a fact clearly illustrated by the administrative reforms subjecting the affairs of Santiago and Alcántara to select councillors drawn from the council of justice.¹ These administrative reforms, though shortlived,² anticipated the work of the Catholic sovereigns by creating what was in effect a council of the military orders. It was the beginning of a process which was completed by Adrian VI's bull of 1523, granting to Charles V the permanent incorporation of the masterships to the Crown.³ It should be remembered, however, that the absorption and control of the masterships only affected part of the problem. The power and wealth of the nobility within the orders remained right down until the nineteenth century.⁴

1 Escorial, x.II.14., fol.106R. The document is undated but clearly belongs to the 1450s.

2 Henry IV only held on to the administration of Alcántara for the first two and a half years of his reign and then granted it to Gómez de Cáceres: Palanco Romero, *op.cit.*, p.49.

3 Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, p.77.

4 Góngora, *ubi supra*, p.4.

CHAPTER V

THE TOWNS

1) Juridical aspects.

Castilian towns formed separate juridical entities in society by virtue of their charters and privileges. Terminology distinguished between towns (villas) and cities (ciudades). Both these labels were juridical titles bestowed by the Crown. Cities were regarded as the most important towns and were invariably addressed in royal letters as 'very noble and very loyal'. The use of this highly prized form of address in itself indicates that the title could be granted for purely political reasons. In 1465, for example, Henry IV rewarded the town of Jerez for its political support with the privilege of being entitled 'muy noble y muy leal'.¹

The terminology on the whole corresponded to the socio-economic realities of the urban world. Cities tended to have large jurisdictions which included towns and villages. There were, of course, exceptions where the juridical labels did not correspond to social realities. In the Basque area, for example, there was one city and twenty towns; the city, however, was Orduña and Bilbao /

1 Sancho, Historia, i.19.

Bilbao was a mere town.¹ Logically, moreover, the title of city or town could be abolished by the Crown. Henry IV quite clearly intended, in 1472, to deprive the town of Sepúlveda of its privilege and title of 'town' and to bestow the title on an area the name of which was left blank in the royal letter.² Despite such anomalies, however, the terminology corresponded fairly well with the social, economic, and demographic importance of the urban entities involved. Most of the important Castilian towns were included in the fifteen cities and two towns which had a right to be represented in the cortes.³

Originally municipal charters or fueros, granted between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, had recognised the establishment and existence of urban entities within society. During this period several fueros of specific towns served as models for the general granting of fueros. The fuero of Logroño served as the model for fueros granted to towns in the Basque provinces. After the reconquest of the south, the towns of Andalusia, such as Seville, Córdoba, and Murcia, were given fueros based on the Toledo model. The differences involved in the grants of the various fueros were no doubt originally important.⁴ /

1 García de Cortazar, Vizcaya en el siglo xv, p.58 and map facing p.66.

2 Juridically Sepúlveda would have ceased to exist as a town: C.D.R.A.H., 667-72(cxcii,1472).

3 J.H.Mariejol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, trans. and ed. B.Keen (New Jersey,1961), p.282.

4 The best study of the emergence of the towns is L.García de Valdeavellano, Sobre los burgos y los burgueses de la España medieval (Madrid,1960).

important. By the fifteenth century, however, these differences had become blurred. Indeed the increasing importance of some towns made nonsense of the original dependent relationships on specific fuero models. Seville, which originally derived its fuero from the Toledan model, serves as a good example. For, by the fifteenth century, municipal government in Seville served as the practical model for other urban governments, not only in Andalusia but even in Toledo itself. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the development of the town government of Jerez, for example, was modelled on that of Seville.¹ In all matters, from the imposition of new taxes to the administration of justice, reference was made to the practice in Seville.² In Toledo the reform of town government followed the pattern of Seville with a town official being sent, in 1422, from Toledo to Seville in order to collect transcripts of documents and privileges which formed the basis of municipal government there.³ In the 1440s Toledo was again modelling its government on that of Seville - this time with respect to its financial administration.⁴ Indeed the form of government /

1 Sancho, Historia, i.6-7.

2 See the royal licence acceding to the request by Jerez for municipal taxes modelled on Seville: A.M.J., Actas Caps., 1410, fol. 81R, 20 April 1410. The oligarchs of Jerez also appealed to practices in Seville in their dispute over jurisdiction with the adelantado mayor: ibid, C.12, no.6, V.1, 17 Jan. 1421.

3 See A. Sierra Corella, 'Libro cartulario de jurados de Toledo', B.R.A.H., xciv(1929), 193-213.

4 See A.M.S., caja 1445-6, which contains a copy of the information on Seville's financial administration which the contadores sent to Toledo.

government in Seville was to serve as a model for many of the towns in the new world.¹

A detailed examination of fueros, therefore, would give a misleading picture of the juridical framework of the towns. The fueros were radically altered and enlarged by successive confirmations and additional privileges.² By the fifteenth century, in fact, fueros, prerogatives, and privileges, had all fused to produce a juridical structure remarkably similar to the lordships granted to the nobility. In practice the great towns held lordships which, from the juridical point of view, were in all essential aspects the same as those of the nobility. In 1435, for example, John II granted the lordship of the town of Arcos de la Frontera to Seville. The grant included the land, meadows, pastures, waters, justice, jurisdicción civil y criminal, alta y baja y mero y mixto imperio, and all rights, taxes and revenues belonging to the señorío or lordship. Seville was empowered to appoint the municipal officials of Arcos but, as with almost all grants of lordship, the Crown retained alcabalas, monedas, tercias, and the mayoría de la justicia. From the /

1 A.Muro Orejón, 'El ayuntamiento de Sevilla modelo de los municipios americanos', A.U.H., xxi(1960), 69-85.

2 Urban privileges were often confirmed during meetings of the cortes although such confirmations were not inserted in the cuaderno. See, for example, the confirmation of Toledo's privileges in B.N., MS, 13103, fols. 174R-175R, 15 Dec. 1393.

the juridical point of view, therefore, Arcos had been added to the existing lordship of Seville.¹ The opposite process can be illustrated from the occasion, already cited, when Henry IV decided to abolish the juridical existence of Sepúlveda as a town.² The crucial point was not the deprivation of the title of 'town' but the dismantling of the lordship. All the attributes of lordship were listed in the document and the letter was specifically addressed to all those areas and persons previously within the lordship. Both processes - the dismantling and creation of urban lordships - can also be illustrated by those highly fantastic but completely logical documents where lordships were created so that they could almost immediately be alienated to the nobility. Thus, in one document, John II separated Casas Buenas from the lordship of Toledo, gave it judicial and financial autonomy, and then granted the lordship to Alfonso Alvarez de Toledo.³ In an even more extreme example, 300 vasallos of Vinuesa were given their own lordship in order to separate them from the lordship of the town of Soria: the remaining population of Vinuesa remained subject to Soria but the 300 vasallos immediately lost their autonomy by being /

1 A.M.S., privilegios, carp.2, no.56, 9 July 1435.

2 See above p.331

3 A.G.S., C.y J.de Hac., leg.1, no.20, 21 and 28 April 1445.

being granted in lordship to Pero López de Padilla, adelantado mayor of Castile.¹

The juridical view of towns which has been briefly stated clearly does not take into account the fundamental variations in the sizes and types of towns.² In many cases town and country were often inseparable. This was true not only of the smaller towns but even of larger ones such as Bilbao.³ Many towns were not independent and did not hold lordships. Towns within a municipal lordship had their governing groups controlled by the towns holding the lordship. Burgos, for example, appointed directly to the chief offices of towns under its control and exercised a right of confirmation with respect to the minor posts.⁴ In seigneurial towns the urban officials tended to be the direct representatives of their noble's interests, as at Villalón with the Pimentel or in Puerto de Santa María with the Medinaceli.⁵ In these towns the growth of an urban patrician class could be seriously impeded. Whether the town was taken over directly /

1 A.D.M., Ad., leg. 37, doc. 42, 14 Sept. 1471.

2 See the excellent study of the physical aspects of medieval Spanish towns by L. Torres Balbas in L. Torres Balbas, L. Cervera, F. Chueca, P. Bidagor, Resumen histórico del urbanismo en España (Madrid, 1954), pp. 1-107.

3 García de Cortazar, op. cit., pp. 58-62.

4 A. Salva, 'El primer libro de actas municipales', R.A.B.M., viii (1903), 260-7.

5 R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, passim; A.D.M., Cog., leg. 2, doc. 38 and leg. 3, doc. 79.

directly by the lord or came into his control by a series of rapid royal grants alienating key positions, the result was in many cases to turn the town into a family possession.¹

2) The wealth of the towns

1) The control of urban wealth

How powerful and wealthy were the towns? It will be seen that the wealth and the power of some towns compared favourably with that of the greater nobility. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the towns acted as separate groupings within society with their own political programmes. There were, of course, occasions when towns appeared to present a corporate front against the Crown or the nobility. Examples can be given of towns buying their independence from noble control,² of urban resistance to royal taxation,³ and of the fleeting but impressive leagues or hermandades of towns.⁴ Yet urban revenues and militias were controlled not by towns but by ruling groups within the towns. Many towns were subject to incessant /

1 Medellín, for example, was practically surrendered by the Prince of Asturias to Rodrigo Portocarrero in a series of privileges which granted him the fortress, the offices of alcalde mayor and alguacil, and the royal taxes (1449): A.D.M., Med., leg.1, doc.2; leg.3, doc.19; leg.5, doc.4; leg.6, docs.13, 14.

2 The towns of Dueñas and Utiel, for example, bought their freedom from noble lordships and incorporated themselves into the crown lands on condition that the Crown would never again alienate them: A.D.M., Ad., leg.28, doc.27, 16 Nov.1419; B.N.MS., 13110, fols.89R-91R, 9 July 1390.

3 See the example cited in A.Salva, ubi supra, 260-7.

4 L.Suárez Fernández, 'Evolución histórica de las hermandades', C.H.E., xvi(1951), 43-5.

incessant faction fights and anarchy. Clearly much depended on the balance of power within the towns and care must be taken not to categorize all movements as expressions of collective urban programmes. Several types of urban political action can be distinguished. In the first place there were the popular urban uprisings. Some of these were caused by sharp economic depressions. Many found expression as anti-semitic movements. Such uprisings could affect independent towns like Toledo in 1449, or towns within noble lordships, such as Jaén.¹ Secondly there were movements and policies which were inspired by the patrician ruling groups of the great towns. Many of these policies were directed against the nobility. In Seville, for example, an attempt was made to enforce the principle that all the laity, including the greatest nobility, should contribute to municipal and royal taxation.² Moreover up to the 1450s at least, the patrician ruling groups of many of the Castilian towns fought a stubborn struggle against the encroachments of the nobility. Seville was involved in interminable disputes with the Andalusian nobility over land and jurisdiction.³ As early as /

1 See below pp. 497-507

2 See, for example, A.M.S., caja 1407-8, no. 220, which instructs officials to collect pedido payments from all the nobility and their dependents.

3 Disputes with the Ponce de León over Alcalá de Guadaira, with the adelantado over Carmona, with the constable over the soap industry ...: A.M.S., cajas de mayordomazgo, passim.

as 1421 Córdoba was resisting royal grants to Alvaro de Luna which encroached on the municipal revenues.¹ Indeed the towns managed to exert pressure on the Crown through the cortes and a whole series of quo warranto proceedings were put into motion by the Crown in order to restore to the towns, the lands, revenues, and jurisdiction usurped by the nobility. Nor were these quo warranto proceedings a mere sham as the cases of Badajoz, León and Salamanca show.² By the 1460s, however, the ability of the patrician ruling groups to resist noble encroachments had largely collapsed. The members of the patriciate did not disappear. Yet the chief offices in urban government were now held by the great landed aristocracy and the patricians tended to be the clients of noble patrons.³ Urban movements and policies were now those of the great nobility. When, in 1467, Burgos, Valladolid, Avila, Palencia, Zamora, Seville, Córdoba, and Cádiz backed Alfonso XII against Henry IV, this was due to the control of /

1 The revenues were those of the tahurerías: A.M.C., sec.19, jurados, nos.9,12, petition and letters of 20 Nov., 1 and 16 Dec.1421, and 12 May 1422.

2 The best detailed study of noble usurpations and the quo warranto investigations is N.Cabrillana, 'Salamanca en el siglo xv: nobles y campesinos', Hisp. (cuadernos anexos), iii (1969), 255-95. E.Rodríguez Amaya, 'La tierra en Badajoz', R.E.E., viii (1952), 5-107 deals with the investigations in the Badajoz area. It is clear that similar action was taken by the Crown with respect to other towns. A.M.L., doc.758, 15 May - 25 Oct.1434, for example, contains a whole series of sentencias by a royal letrado against the nobility who usurped the lands of León.

3 See below pp.520, 526-8.

of the great nobility and was not due to any independent political programme of the towns.¹ Lastly, one should mention the hermandades. As will be seen below, the most impressive hermandad was that involving the towns of the north coast. Motivated by and for economic reasons, this Castilian Hansa of northern towns managed to run its own trading policies and even formulate its own foreign policy. This was clearly a unique feature and was in no way duplicated in the rest of the kingdom.²

It is necessary, therefore, to bear in mind the fact that the wealth and the power of the towns were not important in themselves. What mattered was the control of this wealth and power, and from this point of view the 'town', as a corporate institution, was a fiction. A glance at any of the accounts of the town of Seville makes this point clear. In 1444, for example, Seville defended itself against an attack by the Aragonese party led by the Infante Enrique. The defence was successful and subsequently the accounts show that the patrician oligarchs were paying a certain Juan Guillén to write a chronicle about the town's resistance to the Infante Enrique.³ In fact the town's resistance had not been unaided /

1 See below p. 2531

2 See below p. 604

3 A.M.S., caja 1445-6, order of payment, 4 Aug. 1445. A similar order in ibid, caja 1447-8, bundle 1.

unaided. The master of Alcántara had sent forces to help in the town's defence. The town, however, while paying for a chronicle celebrating the urban glory refused to pay anything towards the expenses of the Alcántara forces and three years later the matter was still being argued out in the king's council.¹ This position of patrician independence was soon to change. By 1471 the duke of Medina Sidonia could make the town of Seville pay for an enormous account of 1,619,749 ms for his own naval war against the marquis of Cádiz.² Bearing the whole problem of control of town government in mind, it is now possible to look at the sources of urban wealth.

ii) The sources of corporate income

Urban corporate wealth presents problems which make a satisfactory analysis impossible. Yet an analysis must be attempted if only to avoid the alternative of a long and detailed presentation of a list of urban taxes.³

Discussion on the sources of wealth of the nobility, the Church, and the military orders centred on revenues deriving from formal lordship, agricultural exploitation, and /

1 A.G.S., Exp. Hac., leg. 2, no. 168, submission of Seville to the council, 2 March 1447.

2 A.M.S., caja 1471-2, accounts of naval expenditure submitted by the duke, 11 Nov. 1471.

3 For detailed notes on some of these taxes see Appendix V below pp. 594-9.

and the Crown. It is difficult to distinguish between urban revenues in this way. It is true that, by the fifteenth century, urban immunities and privileges resembled seigneurial lordships. But this was a resemblance in juridical formulae and did not apply in practice. In the north, urban immunities were the result of a slow and complicated process. Consequently there are no series of lordship grants to serve as a basis for distinguishing between revenues inherent in lordship and subsequent additions. In the south, urban lordships were created after reconquest and a basic framework is available. Yet if the most prominent example of such a lordship - Seville - is studied in detail, it is still impossible to make the relevant distinctions. For, in the south, the major revenue of the towns was provided by the almojarifazgo - a generic term which covered a wide variety of taxes. Almojarifazgo income could, therefore, include taxes inherent in the original grant of lordship, alienated royal revenues, and income from agricultural exploitation. During the first half of the century the almojarifazgo revenues provided Seville with at least 30% of its income (Table XXII)¹ and any attempt to analyse urban revenues therefore becomes difficult since the exact revenues /

¹ Appendix W below p. 600.

revenues included in the almojarifazgo cannot be distinguished from each other.¹

The large sums raised by the almojarifazgo revenues, however, underline some important points. In the first place they serve to emphasise the importance of the lands included in a town's lordship. In Seville the almojarifazgo revenues were all derived from the areas dependent on the town and not from the town itself. Thus the huge extent of Seville's lordship is revealed in the importance of these dependent areas as sources of revenue.² The decline in the proportional importance of the almojarifazgo, from 43.7% in 1406-7 to 29.74% in 1452-3, almost certainly reflects the demographic change in the balance between the town and its countryside (Table XXII).³

The almojarifazgo revenues also underline the importance of royal privileges to urban wealth. No direct relationship can be made between royal privileges and the various revenues contained in the almojarifazgo save in the limited sense that everything, even formal lordship, can ultimately be regarded as having once belonged to the Crown. Yet there can be no doubt that in general the towns of Andalusia gained the greatest benefit in the process /

1 See the notes on the almojarifazgo in Appendix V below

2 See the map of Seville and its dependent areas. The original lordship granted to Seville was geographically larger than the kingdom of Valencia annexed by Jaime I: Vicens, Historia, ii.13.

3 Appendix W below p. 600.

process of accumulating royal privileges. These privileges were granted by the Crown for several reasons.¹ The Moorish frontier presented dangers which the Crown tried to solve by the grant of massive lordships to the towns, the Church and the nobility. Towns were expected to organize the defence of these areas granted to them. It is possible also that, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there was a deliberate policy by the Crown which aimed at strengthening the southern towns in order to counter noble power. Certainly royal privileges were sometimes granted as a direct result of urban support for royal policies. For these reasons lucrative revenues, such as taxes on salt and taxes subsequently incorporated into the urban almojarifazgo, were alienated and proved valuable sources of income for towns such as Córdoba, Seville, Murcia, and even towns as far north as Toledo.² However by the fifteenth century the towns, like the Church, ceased to be the recipients of royal privileges granting extra sources of income. Moreover towns, unlike the nobility, did not augment their corporate wealth /

1 See generally I. Alvarez de Cienfuegos, 'Notas para ... las haciendas municipales', in Homenaje a don Ramón Carande (Madrid, 1963), ii, 3-19; R. Carande, 'Sevilla, fortaleza y mercado', A.H.D.E., ii (1925), 233-401; J. Torres Fontes, 'La hacienda concejil de Murcia', A.H.D.E., xxvi (1956), 741-56.

2 It should also be remembered that the southern towns benefited from royal frontier subsidies and from tax exemptions designed to stimulate military defences. See, for example, the statement of royal policy with respect to the moneda forera in A.M.C., Sec. 18, moneda forera, 2, 26 June 1406.

wealth by usurping royal taxation.¹

As far as income from agriculture exploitation is concerned little can be deduced, even from the detailed accounts of Seville. Censes and rents in the area of the town itself provided less than 2% of the town's corporate income (Table XXII)², but it must be remembered that revenues of this kind were almost certainly included in the almojarifazgo revenues of the dependent regions.

Contemporaries used the term bienes propios to designate the corporate wealth of a town. It was a term which they clearly understood as including all sources of revenues belonging to the town as a corporation. Within this general term they only distinguished between the different individual taxes or between the different areas of tax farms.³ Historians have subsequently attempted to arrange these taxes into categories. The term bienes propios, for example, has been taken to refer to the restricted group of revenues derived from such things as common pasture land (ejidos), woods, orchards, and houses.⁴ Detailed notes on the taxes and the grouping of taxes into such categories may be found in the statistical tables (Tables XXI-XXII).⁵ Once again, however, the analysis is arbitrary /

1 See below p. 347

2 Appendix W below p. 600

3 A.M.S., annual conditions and registers of farms, passim.

4 For example, L. García de Valdeavellano, Historia de las instituciones, p. 554.

5 Appendices V and W below pp. 594-600.

arbitrary since the almojarifazgo revenues certainly included taxes, like the portazgo, which could be grouped in other categories.

The analysis of Sevillian revenue by categories needs little comment (Table XXII)¹. The economic and demographic importance of Seville is underlined by the importance of tolls on trade, control of markets, and taxes on consumption and production which accounted for between 35% and 50% of urban income. The fact that the percentage was not higher is to be explained by a fiscal structure in which the main taxes deriving from Seville's trade - customs duties and alcabalas - were retained by the Crown.² This also served to underline the value of the common property which remained the greatest source of income in many of the smaller urban communities of the Castilian meseta.

iii) The overall picture of urban wealth

Royal generosity did not necessarily lead to a healthy surplus in municipal finances. Indeed the royal privileges to the southern towns were intended to help the towns fulfil an administrative and defensive task which the Crown itself could not perform. The regular incomes of /

¹ Appendix W below p.600

² These taxes were included in the almojarifazgo mayor; see the notes on the almojarifazgo in Appendix V below pp.597-8.

of the large towns, in fact, do not seem to have been in a healthy condition. The finances of the town of Murcia were in a state of constant deficit,¹ and the finances of Seville were in a similarly precarious condition. The statistical data on Seville serve to illustrate the salient points (Table XX).² In the first place total regular income was not high when it is remembered that the town controlled a vast lordship and was without doubt the richest town in the kingdom. The highest figure for income given in Table XX was for the year 1447-8; a convenient fact since it allows for direct comparison with the Libro de Asientos of 1447. In this year the town's gross income stood at 1,077,488 mrs and 1 dinero - a figure only slightly higher than the sums which a count of Alba held from the Crown alone at the same date (Tables XII and XX).³ Moreover the net balance of the town's accounts in 1447-8 was a deficit of over 60,000 mrs. The figures for the other years confirm the same points - a fairly insubstantial income, given the size and importance of the town, and difficulties in covering expenditure.

The explanation for this precarious position does not lie in any lack of an efficient administration. On the /

1 Torres Fontes, ubi supra, pp.751-2; Torres Fontes, Los judíos murcianos en el reinado de Juan II (Murcia, 1965), pp.18-19; J.Valdeón Baroque, 'Una ciudad castellana ... el ejemplo de Murcia', Hisp. (cuadernos anexos), iii (1969), 211-54.

2 Appendix U below p.593

3 Appendices L and U below pp.595, 593.

the contrary the accounts of Seville show an extremely efficient and sophisticated administration at work. The main explanation is to be found in the differences between noble and municipal finances. Throughout the century there is hardly a trace of any usurpation of royal taxes by the town. The royal towns, indeed, were liable to strict control by the Crown over their finances. Reorganization of existing resources could be carried out unilaterally,¹ but the imposition of new taxes was subject to royal approval and this approval was not normally given except during periods of extreme economic crisis.² For this reason alone the usurpations of royal revenues, which provided the great nobility and military orders with such vast sums of money, hardly figure throughout a whole century of accounts for a town such as Seville.³

Another explanation for the precarious state of municipal finances is to be found in the pattern of expenditure. /

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- 1 See, for example, the documents on the reorganisation of the common property and the tax farms in A.M.S., caja 1433-5, docs. for the financial year 1435-6.
 - 2 Both the duration and amounts of the new taxes were fixed by the Crown. For an example see A.M.S., caja 1468-70, royal letter dated 20 Sept. 1470 and the farm conditions of the temporary taxes for one year from 1 Dec. 1470 to 16 July 1471. Royal permission in this case was granted in order to help the town pay for grain imports during the crisis of 1468-9. Such royal aid did not represent additional income since crises gravely affected the normal sources of urban income: see, for example, *ibid*, caja 1412-13, nos. 171-9.
 - 3 Thus although the alcabala could be partially alienated to a town, as at Murcia, it is difficult to find examples of usurpations. During a crisis Seville sometimes arranged for the suspension of alcabalas on imported grain in return for a promise to pay the royal officials at a later date. Alternatively Seville itself farmed the royal alcabala and shifted the weight of taxation on to other municipal taxes. But in both cases the Crown did not lose revenue. Examples in A.M.S., caja 1414-15, no. 49; caja 1421-3, 27 Sept. 1423; caja 1424-5, 19 June 1424.

expenditure. There can be no doubt that the patrician oligarchies manipulated urban finances to their own benefit. Yet such benefits were, in a sense, part of the normal pattern and an analysis of the expenditure of the richest town of the kingdom shows that income was burdened by hefty items of expenditure and that even a slight crisis could plunge the town accounts into the red.

The greatest single burden of a recurrent kind was the expenditure on salaries and castles. In 1416-17 this accounted for 43.46% of expenditure and had risen to 66.34% by 1452-3 (Tables XXIII-XXIV).¹ This high percentage was not necessarily the result of corruption. Officials, after all, had to be paid and the salary of the patrician veinticuatro, 3,000 mrs per year, was low. The salaries of the patricians were supplemented by payments for their positions as castellans - a payment clearly open to abuse, although it only added 6,000 mrs to their salaries and it must be remembered that the fifty or so castles listed in the accounts were not fictitious.²

The /

1 Appendices X and Y below pp. 602-3

2 See F. Collantes de Terán, 'Los castillos del reino de Sevilla', A. Hisp., xviii (1953), 117-85 and Appendix Z below pp. 604-616

The remaining income could be seriously affected in several ways. Probably the crucial point in almost any year was the extent to which revenues failed to materialise. Figures for income were based on the farms made at the beginning of the fiscal year. A collapse in these farms obviously depended on the economic and political situation.¹ Entered as expenditure they accounted in 1452-3 for 5.99% of the total - a sum almost sufficient by itself to have achieved a proper balance.² Further problems were created by crises which are best understood in terms of a specific example.

In 1416-17 a back-log of salaries and debts and the activities of the royal corregidor accounted for 26.91% of expenditure (Table XXIII).³ Clearly this extraordinary expenditure was responsible for the year's deficit, otherwise the balance would have shown a healthy surplus of 157,735 ms. What had happened?

In the first place the town council was still paying for the effects of the economic crisis of 1412-14.⁴ The income side of the accounts had already been affected by economic and demographic dislocation - the town council, for example, had been forced to suspend all taxes in the Burguillos /

1 See examples in Table XXV-C, Appendix 2 below pp. 611-6.

2 Table XXIV, Appendix Y below p. 603.

3 Appendix X below p. 602.

4 For a brief description of this crisis see above pp. 78-80

Burguillos area for four years.¹ On top of this the council had tried to alleviate the grain crisis by suspending the alcabalas and dipping into cruzada revenues - these royal revenues had to be repaid. In 1415-16 the council managed to repay the borrowed cruzada revenues.² In 1416-17 they paid back a further 20,000 mrs to the royal officials for the alcabalas suspended in 1412-13.³ But the crisis had also meant that the payment of some regular expenses had been postponed. By 1416-17 the council was at last beginning to catch up with these expenses which included a back-log of salaries and the cost of a previous Corpus Christi celebration. Finally two royal orders, unrelated to the crisis, raised the total expenditure under this heading by another 41,109 mrs.⁴

On the 18th April 1416, John II wrote to the town council from Valladolid. He underlined the gravity of the political disturbances in Seville caused by the warring Niebla and Stúñiga factions. He recalled the activities of a corregidor whom his father had sent to Seville, and appointed Doctor Fortún Velásquez de Cuéllar as corregidor for /

1 A.M.S., caja 1411-12, no. 174: exemption from taxation for four years granted to Burguillos because of serious depopulation resulting from the military operations of Ferdinand of Antequera.

2 Ibid, caja 1415-16, no. 67: receipt acknowledging repayment.

3 A.M.S., caja 1416-17, no. 20: order to pay 20,000 mrs as the last sum in settlement of suspended alcabalas.

4 One order was for the payment of 32,000 mrs to Gonzalo Ochoa, an alcaldede la justicia, who had been suspended by the Crown in 1415 and now had his salary paid and backdated to his suspension. The remaining 9,109 mrs were awarded to a jurado by a royal sentencia. A.M.S., caja 1416-17, nos. 100, 103.

for a period of six months. To make his mission effective he empowered the corregidor to eject any one from the town, gave him complete control in justice and politics, and suspended all those officials having judicial power and control over the urban police and guards.¹

The royal corregidores were powerful and ideal agents for dealing with urban anarchy. Usually they were appointed on a temporary basis and were sent to deal with a specific problem. Two factors affected the town finances as a result. The first was that towns had to foot the bill for the corregidores' activities. The mere presence of Fortún Velásquez de Cuéllar in Seville cost the town 7,500 mrs per month in salary alone - that is a monthly item of expenditure which was two and a half times the yearly salary of a patrician (Table XXIII).² The second factor brings the discussion back to its starting point. Clearly the activities of the corregidor and the back-log of salaries and debts which so adversely affected Seville's finances in 1416-17 cannot be regarded as items of recurrent expenditure. Yet crises in some shape or form were never long absent. In Seville economic crises affected the town during /

1 The letter, sent by Catherine of Lancaster, is in A.M.S., caja 1416-17, no. 16. The mission was a tricky one owing to the struggle at court between the queen mother and the Aragonese party. The corregidor, however, was a skilled man who ended his days as bishop of León: see above p. 294

2 In this case the corregidor also received the salary of an alguacil mayor. Data on his salary in A.M.S., caja 1416-17, nos. 75, 106. See also Appendix X below p. 602

during every decade up to 1475.¹ A corregidor, appointed temporarily, could remain a burden on the town's finances for a period of several years. In fact Fortún Velásquez de Cuéllar had already been in Seville as corregidor before 1416-17 and he and his direct successors were to remain there for at least another four years.²

iv) The towns and royal taxes and military power

The finances which have been discussed constituted the regular yearly income of the towns supplemented, during periods of crisis, by temporary impositions and loans. But although this corporate wealth attracted the attention of patricians and nobility, other aspects of urban taxation were probably more important. Towns acted as royal agents in the collection of the royal taxes of the monedas and pedidos granted by the cortes. Towns were also expected to /

1 See Appendix A below p.554.

2 The fact that Catherine of Lancaster's letter appears to ignore the previous missions of the corregidor is due to Velásquez having acted as corregidor for the other regent, Ferninand of Antequera. As late as Oct.1414 his reports were sent to the Aragonese - not the Castilian - court: A.M.S.,caja 1414-15, no.73. It was precisely during the years 1415-17 that Aragonese control of southern Castilian affairs crumbled. The existence of corregidores - Fortún Velásquez de Cuéllar, Ruy García de Villalpando, Juan Alfonso, Luis Alvarez de Paz, and Pedro García de Burgos - down to at least 1421 is attested by documents too numerous to cite. For part of the political background see Anacdotario Sevillano, pp.57-82.

to contribute urban militias for military campaigns and in some cases manpower for the royal navy. Normally the raising of such sums of money was instigated by the Crown, and the request was for specific sums of money granted by the cortes or specific numbers of troops for a specific purpose. The revenues, therefore, were not urban revenues and they were not levied by the towns as a matter of course. Yet in a very real sense administrative control remained with the towns. For the total costs were assessed by the town, the total was distributed over the districts of the town and the dependent municipalities, and the collection of these sums was in the hands of town officials.¹ Furthermore, as far as urban militias were concerned, it was the town officials who actually spent the money thus raised.

In general terms, therefore, the assessments or repartimientos for troops or taxes voted by the cortes, were most easily usurped or controlled at town level even though in both cases the towns were acting on behalf of the Crown. Since vast sums of money could be involved the temptation to usurp such wealth was great. In the case of the urban militias the attraction was not so much the money itself as the opportunity of controlling an efficient fighting force which cost nothing. The attraction of /

¹ With the pedidos and monedas, however, the Crown designated the total amount of money to be raised.

of the royal monedas and pedidos was simpler - effective domination of a town ensured that the Crown could be persuaded to share the proceeds. These were the opportunities which tempted the great nobility to impose their control over the towns of Castile.

3) Patrician Oligarchies

1) The framework of urban government

The larger Castilian towns were dominated by patrician oligarchies and it is necessary to examine very briefly the framework of urban government which allowed the patricians to retain power.¹

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries witnessed a royal intervention in urban government which created a restrictive pattern of town government in place of the previous 'open' town councils. The reign of Alfonso XI (1312-1350) was, in this respect, decisive. Town government was now essentially based on a body of regidores who were to be appointed by the Crown. In 1345, for example, bodies of royal regidores were set up in Burgos, León, Segovia /

1 In general see L.García de Valdeavellano, Historia de las instituciones, pp.529-50. For specific towns see J.García Sainz de Baranda, La ciudad de Burgos (Burgos, 1967), ii.chaps.xxxii-xxxix; J.Torres Fontes, 'El concejo murciano en el reinado de Pedro I', C.H.E., xxv-xxvi(1957), 251-78; J.Valdeón Baroque, ubi supra, passim; A.Muro Orejón, ubi supra, passim; A.Alvarez Jusúe, 'Ordenación jurídica dada a Sevilla', A.Hisp., xvi(1952), 177-206; the same, 'La justicia sevillana', A.Hisp., xix(1953), 17-50.

Segovia, and Jerez.¹ The regidores appointed by the Crown were, in their turn, empowered to appoint those urban officials who had previously been elected by the assemblies of inhabitants. By the end of the fourteenth century almost all the Castilian towns were, with variations, organized in a similar fashion.²

A desire for centralisation had prompted the Crown to reorganize the towns. Yet already by the end of the fourteenth century, given the mechanics of the system of appointments, the effective control of town government was vested in the oligarchies of the regidores and not in the Crown. Municipal officials were not appointed by the Crown but by the regidores subject to royal approval. The regidores were theoretically appointed by the Crown but the royal appointment tended merely to confirm the wishes of the regidores. In this way the office of regidor (regimiento) came to be regarded as part of the property of its holder - an office which could be passed on to other members of the family or to friends. Legally the Crown still retained control. On occasion the Crown used its power to reward deserving royal officials with a regimiento /

1 For Jerez see Sancho, Historia, i.5-7 and A.M.J., V.1, C.9., no.40, which includes Alfonso XI's letter, 1 Jan. era 1383.

2 J.Torres Fontes, ubi supra, passim makes a detailed study of the vicissitudes of this transition in Murcia.

regimiento. But the general tendency was for the regimientos to remain as the property of the families controlling them.

The number of regidores in any town council varied. In Madrid there were twelve regidores, Jerez had thirteen down to the reign of Henry IV, and Seville had twenty four. The number of regidores theoretically appointed often led to the number being used as the description of the official. Thus in Seville the regidor was known as a veinticuatro (twenty four) and in Jerez as a trece. An examination of any list of town officials, however, immediately confirms that the theory did not conform with the practice. In Seville, for example, there were thirty-five 'twenty fours' in 1452-3 (Table XXV-A).¹ The reason for this expansion in numbers will emerge below - office holding was in great demand.

The regidores' ability to form oligarchies was the fundamental feature of town government. Yet theoretically the regidores did not appoint all urban officials. In Jerez, for example, there were eight jurados as well as the thirteen regidores and the two alcaldes mayores chosen from among the thirteen.² Moreover, there did in theory exist elements /

1 Appendix Z below pp.604-7.

2 Sancho, Historia, i.5-7.

elements of representation in urban government.¹ In many cases the regidores themselves were meant to represent both caballeros and hombres buenos pecheros (non noble tax payers).² The officials known as jurados were supposed to represent the inhabitants of the parish or district in which they lived, especially in matters of taxation and accounts.³ Other regulations, varying from place to place, carried the principle of representation to considerable lengths. In Seville, for example, one of the mayordomos (the mayordomo hidalgo) had to be chosen from among the veinticuatros while the other (the mayordomo ciudadano) had to be chosen from among the jurados.⁴ The same applied in the case of the contadores,⁵ the officials known as the fiel ejecutores,⁶ and the procuradores or representatives sent to the cortes. Even messengers were included in these regulations. Every time that Toledo and Seville sent messengers or representatives to court half of them had to be jurados.⁷

These /

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- 1 F. Márquez Villanueva, 'Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo XV', R.A.B.M., lxiil(1957), 523.
 - 2 A document of 1449, for example, makes this distinction between the regidores of Segovia: M. Quintanilla, 'Concordia de los cabildos sobre obras', E.S., vi(1954), 295-319. For Seville, A. Muro Orejón, ubi supra, p. 70.
 - 3 Muro Orejón, ubi supra, pp. 70-71. In the central Castilian towns the sexmero had more or less the same functions.
 - 4 See the royal confirmations of these yearly appointments - for example, A.M.S., caja. 1412-13, no. 9.
 - 5 See A.M.S., caja 1406-7, no. 110, which contains the original decision on this point (1371) and subsequent orders on equal salaries.
 - 6 See the data on representation in the royal merced to the jurado, Anton González: ibid, caja 1445-6, 20 July 1446.
 - 7 A. Sierra Corella, ubi supra, passim, is a mine of information on these aspects of the procuradores and jurados.

These regulations providing for the representation of different interests were ineffective in practice unless backed up by considerable political pressure.¹ The office of jurado, like the regimiento, was either controlled by the regidores or became appropriated to particular families. In Seville the same family could at different times provide a mayordomo hidalgo and a mayordomo ciudadano.²

ii) The existence and continuity of patrician families

The fact that great landed nobility infiltrated into a few key posts and in many cases gained political control of the towns did not impede the patrician families from monopolizing the vast majority of urban offices.

A convenient list of most of the great patrician families of Seville is provided by the salary roll of 1452-3 (Table XXV-A).³ If the few members of the great nobility are eliminated, the remaining names are mainly those which occur with monotonous regularity throughout a century of vast documentation - Melgarejo, Cerón, Medina, Santillán, Cabeza de Vaca, Marmolejo, Bahamón, Ortíz, Mexía, Barba, Quadros, Esquivel, Monsalve, Torres, Vázquez de /

1 As in Segovia where, however, the struggle was between the oligarchs and the excluded nobility rather than between nobles and omes buenos: M. Quintanilla, 'Sentencia arbitral sobre los oficios de la ciudad', E.S., iv (1952), 175-83.

2 See below p. 386

3 Appendix Z below pp. 604-7.

de Moscoso, Pineda, Las Casas. In 1384, for example, Ruy Pérez de Esquivel was mayordomo ciudadano of Seville. Exactly a century later, in 1484, another Esquivel was a veinticuatro and during this century the family provided a succession of veinticuatros, mayordomos hidalgos, jurados, and castellans. The Barba family provide a less complex example. Ruy Barba held various offices from 1399-1407 - mayordomo, veinticuatro, and procurador mayor of Seville. In 1407-8 his son, Juan Barba, succeeded as veinticuatro and the name Juan Barba appears each year as veinticuatro from 1407 down to the list of 1452-3.¹

The situation in Seville was duplicated in other towns. The minutes of the town council meetings in Jerez show that such families as the Villavicencio, Cabeza de Vaca, Valdespino, Vargas, Torres, Natera, Gallegos, Melgarejo, Ortíz, and Mexía, controlled the offices of jurados and regidores.² In Cádiz, the Villavicencio, Bocanegra, Bernal, Negrán, Estopiñán, Sopranis, and other families who formed the oligarchy from the late fifteenth century onwards, had probably controlled offices during the preceding period as well.³ In Burgos, offices were controlled by a tightly knit and related /

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- 1 A.M.S., passim. The Juan Barba throughout the documentation is not, of course, the same man. He renounced his office to his son, Juan Barba, in 1444: Ibid, caja 1445-6, royal confirmation, 6 April 1444.
 - 2 A.M.J., Actas Caps., passim where the officials attending each council meeting are recorded. Sancho, Historia, i. 88, gives a list of the oligarchy families for the late fifteenth century.
 - 3 Sancho, Los Genoveses, passim; Márquez Villanueva, ubi supra, p. 506.

related group of families - the Santa María, Cartagena, Frías, and Maluenda.¹ In Murcia in 1464 the patrician regidores refused to accept a royal corregidor precisely because they feared that he intended changing the hereditary nature of office.² With other towns the information is not so abundant. It would seem however that in Bilbao, Medina del Campo, Segovia, and Córdoba offices were controlled in the same way.³

Not all families, of course, managed to retain their position. In Seville the veinticuatría held by Juan Rodríguez de Hoyos from at least 1407 to 1413 passed, on his death, to Miçer Solugrus Bocanegra and the Bocanegras also failed to establish a patrician dynasty. Inevitably many families became involved dangerously in the politics of the period. The Vanegas family of Córdoba were imprisoned by John II in 1431 and the alcalde mayor, García Fernández de Córdoba, was thrown out of office in 1448 for supporting the Aragonese faction in Castile.⁴ Yet the resilience of patrician families was remarkable and, despite suspensions, imprisonment, and banishment, they retained their positions. In Seville, for example, quite /

- 1 A mine of badly organised information in Cantera Burgos, op.cit., passim.
- 2 Torres Fontes, Fajardo, pp.93,215-6; they accused the corregidor of having introduced shoemakers and other artisans into the regimientos of León.
- 3 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.320-1; Márquez Villanueva, ubi supra, pp.520,526; A.M.C., Sec.19, jurados, no.40, which contains a useful list of officials in 1432 which can be compared with scattered references in other sources.
- 4 Pedro Vanegas had been alcalde mayor in the 1390s: A.D.M., Priego, leg.79, doc.1 and leg.38, doc.38. For the royal action in 1431: Halconero, pp.92-3. For the expulsion of García Fernández: A.D.M., Priego, leg.24, doc.64, 4 Jan. 1448.

quite a number of officials - Cerón, Vázquez de Moscoso, Marmolejo, Esquivel, Medina, Ortiz and others - fell foul of the Crown as a result of the corregidor's work,¹ in 1416-17. Yet despite the fact that they were sent to court, imprisoned, and subsequently banished from Seville for periods varying from five months to one and a half years, the positions of these families remained unshaken. Throughout the whole of this period one of the alcaldías mayores of Seville was held by the Cerón family.²

Given the resilience of these families over long periods of time, it is not surprising to find the same family names in different towns. Often this was caused by the Crown granting municipal offices as rewards to royal officials. The royal mayordomo Andrés de Cabrera, for example, controlled posts as regidor in Segovia, Cuenca, and Seville.³ This type of central grant to a royal official must be clearly differentiated from the control of a locally or regionally powerful family. Given the administrative, ecclesiastical, and economic interdependence between Seville, Jerez, and Cádiz, it is inevitable that the names of Ortiz, Villavicencio, Mexía, and Melgarejo are to be found in the lists of regidores. It is also inevitable that /

1 Details in Anecdótico Sevillano, pp.73-82.

2 A.M.S., passim.

3 Márquez Villanueva, ubi supra, p.507.

that the families which survived in power during the following centuries fused together. The castellan of Santa Olalla del Cala at the beginning of the nineteenth century, don Pedro de Esquivel Medina Barba, for example, carried the names of three of the important fifteenth century patrician families of Seville.¹

4) The economic benefits of officeholding

i) Salaries

What benefits did the patrician families derive from their monopoly of office? The normal salary received by the regidor of a fairly important Castilian town - Seville, Córdoba, Badajoz, Toledo - was 3,000 ms per year.² This was not a high salary and it tended to remain constant in most towns, even into the sixteenth century, despite a drastic rise in nominal prices.³ But, as can be seen in the Seville nomina of salaries for 1452-3 (Table XXV), the basic salary was augmented by additional salaries for other offices or tasks performed by the regidores. In Seville, for example, it was established custom that the commands of castles were reserved to the town /

1 This specific example in Collantes, ubi supra, p.177.

2 A.M.S., yearly nominas of salaries, passim; Márquez, ubi supra, pp.526-7.

3 R.Pike, Enterprise and adventure (New York, 1967), p.163.

town officials with the result that almost all alcaldes and regidores received an additional 6,000 mrs per year.¹ Other regidores received extra payments as procurador mayor (6,000 mrs), contador mayor (3,000 mrs) fieles (2,000 mrs), alcalde de la justicia (20,000 mrs) and so on. Jurados as such did not receive salaries but were often paid for additional offices which they held.²

The total income, therefore, which a regidor could derive from office was quite substantial. It is not surprising that the patricians regarded their salaries as being the item of greatest importance as far as urban expenditure was concerned. In Seville, for example, when the Crown appointed a royal official as the perpetual mayordomo in 1447, the first condition that the town imposed on the new mayordomo was that all salaries should be paid in cash during the first and second financial periods of each year.³

ii) Urban offices as rewards for royal officials

Many royal officials were rewarded by the Crown with urban offices. Much is obscure about the interplay between /

1 This practice was approved by the Crown: A.M.S., caja 1447-8, royal letter of 30 Aug. 1447.

2 See Appendix Z below pp. 604-7

3 The new mayordomo was the royal contador mayor, Alfonso Pérez de Vivero. For his appointment and its conditions: A.M.S., caja 1449-50, letter dated Tordesillas, 29 April 1448.

between the world of the court and town officials but some points are clear. In the first place many of these royal officials were based on the court and their urban posts were merely additional perquisites. The salaries attached to these offices obviously constituted useful income. Contadores mayores and judges of the audiencia, such as Alfonso Pérez de Vivero, Andrés de la Cadena, and Fernando Gómez de Herrera, were office holders in Seville, Segovia, and Toledo, although they spent most of their lives at court.¹

It is also clear that the variety of such appointments was great. A tesorero mayor of the Basque area could be a regidor in Zamora, and a mere chamberlain could be a regidor in Córdoba.²

The problems begin to arise when trying to determine the ability of these royal officials to find a permanent place in the locally established patrician oligarchies. Some, like Nicolas Martínez, royal contador mayor de cuentas and regidor of Seville, managed to maintain their positions and their relatives are to be found gaining office and inter-marrying with the other patrician families.³ Yet the /

1 For Andrés de la Cadena and Gómez de Herrera see C.D.R.A.H., 66 and 75 (xxv,xxxviii,1453). Such royal officials, of course, had to arrange for substitutes. Thus the Seville accounts for 1448 name Alfonso Pérez de Vivero as mayor-domo perpetuo and 'alfonso ferrandes del peso escribano de camara del rey en su nombre': A.M.S.,caja 1447-8, bundle 2.

2 See the cases of Pedro Gómez de Sevilla, later to become a lieutenant contador mayor, and Francisco, regidor of Córdoba in González, Col.Cedulas, i.35-40; A.M.C.,Sec.19, jurados, no.40, 1 July 1432.

3 See below p.371.

the inability of a royal official to secure a permanent position in one town did not necessarily imply a total failure, although this must have happened.¹ It is clear, indeed, that established families of royal officials collected offices in different towns. This was an inevitable tendency since the hereditary nature of offices and the limit to the creation of new offices forced officials to accept vacancies wherever they occurred. Diego Arias de Avila, for example, was made a regidor of Toledo, although the local basis of this family's power was to be in Segovia.² His predecessor at Toledo was Alfonso Alvarez de Toledo, contador mayor and royal councillor, who might have been expected to transmit the office to one of his sons. Instead one of his sons is to be found as a regidor in Cuenca.³ The best example of such a family of royal officials is provided by the Díaz of Toledo who held offices in towns as far apart as Guadalajara, Toledo, and Seville.⁴ The failure of a family of royal officials to establish a permanent position in the patrician oligarchy of one town does not, therefore, preclude a deliberate consolidation of local power /

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- 1 Diego Fernández de Molina is a case in point. The documentation of Seville and Jerez attests to his importance in royal naval and military matters in the south. Given a veinticuatria in Seville in 1445, he lost it to Alfonso de Ayora in 1448 and then disappears from view: A.M.S., caja 1449-50, 16 Aug. 1448.
 2 B.N., MS., 13032, fol. 39R, 9 Aug. 1456.
 3 Cortes, iii, 456 (1445).
 4 See ibid; Márquez, ubi supra, p. 508; A.M.S., caja 1457-8, royal merced to Luis Díaz de Toledo, 5 Jan. 1459.

power elsewhere.¹

iii) The patricians and the municipal finances

Inevitably urban officials were suspected of lining their own pockets from the town's revenues. Attention concentrated not so much on urban expenditure, which was theoretically covered by accounting procedures, but on the system of farming the revenues. The royal ordinance of Guadalajara of 1436, for example, stipulated

that the alcaldes, alguacil, regidores, mayordomo, escribanos of the council, and others on their behalf cannot farm and will not farm, either by themselves or by means of other people, the revenues and common property of the cities and towns and places where they hold office, nor must they play a part in the farms or be able to act or act as guarantors or sureties for those who are farmers on pain of losing their offices for such action.²

Similar provisions were stipulated at a more local level. In Seville, for example, the conditions of the tax farms laid down that regidores and jurados were not to farm the revenues.³

Despite the ordinances, however, corruption in municipal finances seems to have been fairly prevalent. In many /

1 There are also many cases - Ruy Barba, Ruy López - where men divided their time equally between the court and the town. See, for example, A.M.S., caja 1402-3, nos. 58, 59; caja 1404-5, nos. 54, 77.

2 B.N., MS., 13259, fols. 181V-186V, 14 Dec. 1436.

3 For example A.M.S., caja 1416-17, no. 2, fol. 1R.

cases - especially with items of expenditure - corruption, though suspected, cannot be proved. In Madrid and Badajoz common property was usurped by the officials.¹ In Seville not all expenditure was accounted for in a satisfactory manner. Indeed in some cases - minor ones - little attempt was made to disguise unjustified expenditure. Payments of 'alms' to relatives of patrician office holders, for example, were occasionally not disguised.² Not surprisingly the Crown sometimes intervened - as in León and Seville - to examine accounts or fulminate against the general state of corruption.³

The real opportunity for corruption, however, was in the farming of revenues. For, as the procuradores of the cortes pointed out in 1433, despite the ordinances

the regidores and alcaldes and alguaciles of some cities and towns ... farm ... the revenues ... for sums well below their real value, and because they hold the said offices nobody dares to outbid them in these revenues; moreover, in order to gain them for even lower sums, they farm the revenues without publicising the day on which the bids are to take place ... sometimes they arrange to gain the farms themselves with an outward show of very small bids, and sometimes they arrange matters so that others gain the farms on their behalf ...⁴

How /

1 Márquez, ubi supra, p.527.

2 For example, Alvar Martínez, brother of the tesorero and regidor, Nicolás Martínez, was given 1,000 mrs in 1421 and 500 mrs in alms was given to Constanza González de Esquivel: A.M.S., caja 1412-3, no.18; caja 1421-3, docs. for 1421-2, payment to Martínez.

3 A.M.S., caja 1402-3, no.68 shows that accounts were sent to the royal court for auditing as a result of the suspension of certain officials. Ibid, caja 1426-7, royal letter, 20 March 1426, contains charges of general corruption in Seville. The finances of León were more than once subjected to royal scrutiny because of suspicions of corruption: A.M.L., docs.187, 206, 212, 216, 226.

4 Cortes, iii.180-1(35, 1433).

How much substance was there in these allegations? Even in Seville, where the procedure for farming was fairly rigidly controlled and apparently open to competition, the registers of farms reveal that the ordinances were contravened. In many cases, of course, 'front' men were put up as farmers of revenues and the connection between them and the officials is impossible to prove in a satisfactory manner. But even if only clear cut cases are listed the result is definitive enough. An examination of the farm register for the year 1406-7, for example, reveals the following cases of officials definitely involved in the farm of revenues:-¹

NAME OF TAX FARMER	OFFICE	REVENUE
Juan de Ortega	<u>Jurado</u> , Seville	<u>Almojarifazgo</u> and <u>almotacenazgo</u> of Utrera
Juan Díaz servant of Juan Martínez	Servant <u>Regidor</u>) <u>Mayordomo</u>) "	<u>Almojarifazgo</u> and <u>almotacenazgo</u> of Lebrija
Juan González	<u>Jurado</u> , "	<u>Almojarifazgo</u> of Huelva
Esteban Pérez	<u>Alcalde</u> , Aroche	<u>Almojarifazgo</u> of Aroche
Miguel Fernández	<u>Alguacil</u> , Seville	Taverns outside the city
Pedro /		

¹ A.M.S., caja 1406-7, no.3, register of the farms, 16 fols.

NAME OF TAX FARMER	OFFICE	REVENUE
Pedro Fernández	<u>jurado</u> <u>contador</u>) Seville	Mills, farmed for period of five years
Bartolome Fernández	<u>jurado</u> , "	<u>Terrazgos</u> and <u>rastrojos</u> of Seville
Diego González, servant of Pedro Fernández	servant <u>jurado</u> <u>contador</u>) "	<u>El marco de la plata</u>
Diego Fernández	<u>alguacil</u> , "	<u>Guarda del Corral de los Alcaldes</u>

iv) Royal taxes, financiers, and patricians

The profits which officeholders derived from town revenues must have appeared inconsiderable when compared to the opportunities presented by the world of finance and royal tax farms. The documentation reveals a truly complicated relationship between finance and urban office and the number of individuals involved was fairly significant. It seems probable that most of these individuals originated as financiers and invested their profits in urban office, although some may have been patricians first and utilized their position to become farmers of royal revenues /

revenues. Certainly those financiers who invested in urban office did not immediately cease to operate as tax farmers and financiers. The farming and collection of royal taxes was held to be incompatible with nobility, but many patricians either ignored this point or solved the problem by acting more discreetly as guarantors of farming enterprises or by using third persons.¹ A few concrete examples, followed by a more general analysis, will help to throw some light on this relationship.

The best examples to start with are those involving Jews. Before he stood a chance of infiltrating into a patrician oligarchy, the Jewish financier had first of all to make his profits and then become a Christian and change his name. The opposite sequence of events was impossible. An example of such a family was that of the patrician Marmolejos of Seville. The power and status of this converse family, as John II's secretary pointed out, clearly derived from the success of Francisco Fernández de Marmolejo who had been financier and contador mayor to John I (1379-90).² Already by 1387 the family was well entrenched in Seville for, in that year, the contador /

1 Thus, from at least 1457-9, a servant of Diego López, regidor of Seville, was involved in the royal farms of the Seville area. See A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fol.217V and leg.6, no.8, fol.9R; ibid, Exp.Hac., leg.2, no.34. For tax farming and derogance: O.R., Lib.iv, tit.ii, leyes iv, v.

2 See the Instrucción del relator in Defensorium unitatis christianae, ed. Manuel Alonso, p.352.

contador mayor succeeded in using his influence to secure a valuable financial profit for one of his relatives who was a regidor and a contador of Seville as well as being chief treasurer of the royal mint in Seville.¹ Already, too, both these Marmolejos were royal tax farmers.² Then at the beginning of the fifteenth century the Marmolejo family was joined in Seville by another converso financier - the royal treasurer and contador mayor de cuentas, Nicolas Martínez de Medina. From 1408 to 1411 a close relationship as royal tax collectors developed between Nicolas Martínez and the young regidor, Luis Fernández de Marmolejo, who by 1410 had become the former's son-in-law.³ The Marmolejo descendents had not, therefore, cut off their contacts with their financial background. Yet, as their position became more secure, the Marmolejos could afford to be more discreet. By the 1440s the family /

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- 1 In 1387 John I empowered Marmolejo and the archbishop of Seville to sell jueros worth 100,000 mrs assigned on the almojarifazgo mayor. One juro of 5,000 mrs was sold to Juan de Soto, jurado of Seville, for 56,333 mrs. Three years later, the latter made a written declaration that he had bought the juro on behalf of Alfonso Fernández de Marmolejo, regidor and contador of Seville. On this and further transactions of the same juro: A.D.M., Feria, leg.27, doc.76; leg.29, doc.9.
 - 2 See A.M.J., c.12, 30 June 1403 where Francisco Fernández de Marmolejo is cited as regidor of Seville and one of the arrendadores mayores of the albaquías. Alfonso Fernández de Marmolejo and his descendents are cited as farmers of other taxes.
 - 3 Nicolas Martínez, contador mayor de cuentas and tesorero mayor of the pedidos and monedas, empowers Diego Ortiz and Luis Fernández del Marmolejo, regidores of Seville, to collect these revenues in the dioceses of Seville and Cádiz: A.M.S., caja 1407-8, no.216. Writ from the same to his son-in-law and regidor of Seville, Luis Fernandez del Marmolejo, to collect pedidos and monedas of 1410: ibid, caja 1410-11, no.210.

family acted as guarantors of tax farmers rather than as direct tax farmers or collectors.¹

The example of the Marmolejo family - and also of Nicolas Martínez de Medina - is perhaps exceptional in that important royal offices were involved. The example of Pedro Gonzalez de Bahamon is one of a tax farmer whose activities were completely professional and complicated. From at least 1439 onwards, he is to be found farming royal revenues of all kinds and in all areas - royal taxes on wood and oil in Seville, alcabalas and tercias in the Jerez area, royal revenues in the bishopric of Córdoba and in the region round Niebla, royal revenues still owed from previous years throughout the kingdom, the alcabalas of the archbishopric of Santiago and bishopric of Tuy, and the customs and salt revenues of the kingdom of Galicia.² Operating throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom his entry, into the Seville oligarchy seems, however, not to have been as quickly achieved as that of others. A jurado at first, it was some time before he gained the coveted office of regidor of Seville and even then, as late as 1467, he was described simply as 'an honourable /

1 For the Marmolejos as guarantors see, for example, A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.2, Libro de Rentas of 1440 (hereafter cited as A.G.S., Libro de Rentas, 1440), fol.60V.

2 See A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, Libro de Rentas of 1439 (hereafter cited as A.G.S., Libro de Rentas, 1439), fol.177; ibid., Libro de Rentas, 1440, fol.62V; ibid., leg.11, fols.22R-23V, 32R; ibid., leg.6, no.8, fol.10; ibid., leg.7, no.5; ibid., Exp.Nac., leg.1, no.127.

honourable man who makes his living from tax collecting'.¹
 A less complicated example is that of Pedro de Villacís who, as a collector of Inquisition revenues in Seville, settled in the town towards the end of the fifteenth century, invested his money in buying valuable property in La Plata street from an alcalde mayor, and gained the office of regidor.²

These examples help to illustrate how financiers and tax farmers penetrated into the urban oligarchies. It now remains to give some idea of the scope and intensity of this relationship between financiers and oligarchies.

There can be no doubt that the vast majority of patricians who participated in the farming of royal revenues confined their activities to their own towns or regions. The year 1440 may serve as an example. In that year three jurados and one regidor of Toledo were involved as tax farmers or guarantors of royal taxes collected in the archdeaconry of Toledo.³ In Burgos a regidor, Simón García the Rich, was the chief tax collector for the merindad of Santo Domingo de Silos.⁴ Two jurados, one regidor, and one escribano of Soria were involved in the farming and collection of revenues in the /

1 He was still a jurado in 1446 but had become a regidor by 1452. For the description of him see below 588-91

2 See Claudio Guillén, 'Un padrón de conversos sevillanos', B.Hisp., lxx(1963), 58.

3 Juan Alvares, regidor and farmer of the moneda ferera; Gutierre Fernández, jurado and farmer with another jurado as fiador; Fernán González de la Fuente, jurado and collector of the pedido: A.G.S., Libro de Rentas, 1440, fols. 89V, 45V, 100V.

4 Ibid., fol. 96V.

the bishopric of Osma.¹ A regidor of Guadalajara was one of the guarantors for the chief farmer of revenues in the archdeaconries of Madrid and Guadalajara.² A regidor of León and two regidores of Mansilla acted in a similar capacity for the area of the bishopric of León.³ Two of the guarantors of the pedido of the bishopric of Segovia were regidores of that town.⁴ Diego Rodríguez of Seville, who was chief tax farmer in the bishopric of Palencia and in the area of Palencia and Campos, counted two regidores of Palencia among his financial backers.⁵ Several office holders in Santiago de Compostela acted as guarantors to the chief tax farmer of the archbishopric of Santiago and bishopric of Tuy.⁶ Finally in Seville in 1440 at least nine jurados and two regidores were involved in the collection and farming of royal revenues in the Seville region.⁷

The fact that a patrician office holder merely acted as a guarantor and not directly as a tax farmer did not mean that he had no interest in the farming venture. To stand /

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- 1 Velasco de Barrio Nuevo, regidor and fiador; Fernán Sánchez, jurado and collector of the pedido; another jurado and an escribano as fiadores to the farmer of the moneda forera: ibid, fols.31R,87V,97R.
 - 2 Juan Fernández de Roa, regidor and fiador: ibid, fol.50.
 - 3 But as fiadores for different farmers: ibid, fols.35,92R.
 - 4 Ibid, fol.97V.
 - 5 Luis de Huete and García Alvarez de Toledo, regidores: ibid, fols.27,28R.
 - 6 Ibid, fols.42V-43R.
 - 7 The jurados were Bartolomé Rodríguez, Juan Ruys de Porras, Francisco López, Alfonso López, Gonzalo Ximenes, Andrés Ximenes, Alfonso Ximenes, Diego Ortiz, Pedro González de Bahamón. The regidores were Pedro Ortiz, Pedro Fernández de Marmolejo. Ibid, fols.60V,61,62V,73R,101V.

To stand as surety was in itself an investment in a financial enterprise, the main work of which was done by somebody else. It was an investment which ran the risk of a confiscation of the guarantor's wealth if the farm failed.¹ The direct interest of the guarantors was even more involved when the farm was a family affair. In 1461, for example, Gonzalo Nuñez de la Muela, regidor of Cuenca, Juan Nuñez de la Muela, citizen of Cuenca, and Diego de la Muela, regidor of Molina, acted as financial backers for Luis de la Muela, citizen of Cuenca, when the latter made a bid to secure the farm of the royal salines of Cuenca.²

The financial power of the officeholders naturally varied from town to town and from region to region. In the large towns there was no lack of men of substance who could act both as tax farmers and guarantors. The patrician oligarchy of Seville, for example, could easily provide individuals to put forward sureties of at least 150,000 msrs and two or three guarantors were usually sufficient to cover the commitments of one farmer.³ The same was true of towns like Córdoba, Toledo, Burgos, and Soria.⁴ /

1 The totals of the farm were paid to the Crown in installments and sureties were required to guarantee future payments. The farmer and his guarantors, therefore, constituted a finance company with capital assets.

2 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.11, fol.265R.

3 Indeed the sureties of the guarantors were often well below their true limits. In 1465, for example, Fernando de las Casas doubled the surety of one of his backers with no apparent difficulty: ibid, Exp.Hac., leg.1, no.158.

4 For example two fiadores were sufficient to back the jurado of Soria, Fernán Sánchez, in his farm of the moneda forera of the diocese of Osma: ibid, E.M.R., leg.3, no.10, fol.4V.

Soria. But regions like Galicia and Asturias, for example, lacked towns with a powerful and resourceful urban aristocracy and local financiers were not apparently rich enough to underwrite farming ventures in small numbers. In 1440, for example, Fernán Rodríguez de Sevilla had to provide thirty three guarantors for the customs duties of Galicia and Asturias and the salt revenues of Galicia. Incredibly, although there were ten 'merchants' and one jurado of La Coruña among these guarantors, there were also two peasants (labradores).¹

While the majority of financier patricians tended to involve themselves in the royal finances of their own area, there were, of course, those who worked further afield. A regidor of Cuenca not only collected customs duties in the bishopric of Cuenca but also in the bishopric of Cartagena.² Regidores of Baeza and Guadalajara collected royal revenues in Seville.³ Finally there were those like Pedro González de Bahamón or Juan Álvarez de Toledo, regidor of Toledo, who acted as tax farmers on a national scale.⁴ Such men drew upon the resources of financiers /

1 Ibid., Libro de Rentas, 1440, fols.69V-71V.

2 Juan González de Alcalá: ibid., E.M.R., leg.3, no.5, 1440-5.

3 Juan Alfonso de Rus, regidor of Baeza: A.M.S., caja 1436-8, libro del pedido of 1436, poder of 1 March 1437. Fernán García de Toledo, regidor of Guadalajara: A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fol.334R, 1444.

4 Juan Álvarez de Toledo was one of the arrendadores and recaudadores of the servicio and montazgo in the 1460s: ibid., leg.11, fol.78V. For Bahamón see above pp.372-3.

financiers in different towns.¹ Yet, as will be seen below, constant contact with court circles must have led to contacts which proved useful even in the farms of more modest revenues. On the 12th December 1450, for example, a regidor of Seville, Diego López de Sevilla, could write a letter in Illescas which empowered a regidor of Toledo, Alfonso González de Herrán, to put forward his name as a guarantor for a financier of Madrid who was attempting to win a six year farm of two ninths of one of the royal revenues in Seville.² Without a doubt many members of the urban aristocracy not only originated as financiers but continued to draw considerable profits from financial enterprise.

5) Officeholding and Social Status

1) Privileges and contacts with the court and the nobility

What social benefits pertained to office holding? It has been seen that, in theory, provision had been made for a representation of nobles and pecheros in many urban governments /

1 Two jurados of Toledo and one jurado of Seville, for example, were among the fiadores of the chief tax farmers of all the alcabalas and tercias of the kingdom: ibid, Libro de Rentas, 1440, fols.6R-9R.

2 Ibid, Exp.Hac.,leg.1,no.45.

governments. In practice, however, an aura of nobility was attached to the important urban posts. By the sixteenth century, indeed, the identification between office holding and nobility was in many cases complete. To be a regidor in Seville, for example, one legally 'had to be a denizen of the city, noble, and named to this honour by the king'.¹ In the fifteenth century the jurados and even the mounted constables were, like the nobility and regidores, exempt from royal and municipal taxation.² On the few occasions when urban officials did pay taxes this was because the nobility also were being made to pay for a specific reason.³ In short the jurados and regidores were fiscally exempt in the same way as the nobility, the regidores as a whole acquired an air of nobility, and the patricians also enjoyed the prestige of being the representatives of the Crown.

In practice, of course, many of the patricians were of non-noble origins. The financiers, conversos, and merchants who gained entry into regimientos were seeking to acquire nobility, but nobility was not automatically acquired by entry into the urban oligarchy. Contemporaries realized that these office holders were not all noblemen /

1 R.Pike, op.cit., p.163, note 73.

2 Ibid and A.M.S., caja 1409-10, no.135.

3 A.M.S., caja 1447-8, document entitled 'En sabado cinco de agosto (1447) se ayntaron en la casa delas cuentas...'

noblemen. The example of Pedro González de Bahamón proves the point. When, in 1467, he was described as 'an honourable man who makes his living from tax collecting', this in effect meant that he was a man who was not a noble and did not live nobly because his occupation prevented him from doing so. Yet, by 1467, Pedro González de Bahamón had been a regidor of Seville for at least fifteen years. Office holding provided the opportunities for rising in the social scale but this did not mean that success was either inevitable or quick in coming. What were these opportunities?

Office holding provided contacts with court and noble circles. The documentation of Seville provides so many examples on this point as to make analysis almost superfluous. Considerable sums of money were spent on court officials in order to facilitate the entry of patricians into the political and social citadel of power and in order to protect the town's interests.¹ An endless stream of patrician officials spent money and time at court - officials bearing the names of all the great patrician families of Seville.² The granting of 3,000,000 maravedís /

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- 1 During the first decade of the century Seville paid the royal chancellor of the secret seal an annual sum of 3,000 maravedís: A.M.S., yearly payments till caja 1409-10, no.21, which was cancelled. The nearer the court the greater the expenditure: see the agitated shower of payments to royal porters, guards, constables, and secretaries in ibid, caja 1407-8, nos.23,26-8,42,56,97-8, 101,122 and caja 1410-11, nos.53-6,59,61,65,101.
- 2 See, for example, the court expenses of Martín Fernández Cerón, Ruy Díaz de Cuadros, Juan Fernández del Marmolejo, Pedro Rodríguez de Esquivel ...: A.M.S., caja 1400-1, no.21; caja 1416-17, no.19; caja 1408-9, no.83; caja 1410-11, no.27,...

mrs to the Crown or 12,000 mrs to the constable, in gratitude for honours and services to Seville and its officials, ensured a favourable familiarity of contact at all times.¹ The regidores spent time at court, royal officials were rewarded with the occasional regimiento that fell vacant, and a few powerful nobles held urban office alongside the regidores and jurados. The identification of the patricians with court and noble circles was not a total one but it certainly added to their social prestige.

Nobility and advantageous marriage alliances were the great benefits to be derived from such a situation. Yet the other benefits should not be ignored as the example of the lawyers shows. The lawyers, of course, did not always form part of the closed patrician oligarchies. Merit and ability were necessary in order to gain office as the lawyer of a town, although there may well have been cases of patrician sons entering law.² Indispensable to both the Crown and towns, these lawyers reaped the benefits in several ways. Involved in interminable lawsuits, Castilian towns had to have lawyers permanently at their disposal /

1 John II granted Arcos de la Frontera to Seville 'por que la dicha cibdat e goncalo de cuadros mi veinticuatro como procurador della se ofrescio de me servir con tres cuantos de mrs ...': A.M.S., Privilegios, carp.2, no.56, 9 July 1435. The payment to the constable in ibid, caja 1400-1, no.23.

2 This may have been the case with the Santillán family of Seville but, although letrado members appear on the nominas, the point cannot be proved.

disposal - every nomina of Seville salaries, for example, carried the names of the letrados of the city.¹ But on top of this the acquisition of legal qualifications was positively stimulated by subsidies from urban income which helped pay for 'expenses in obtaining a doctorate'.² In the last resort these subsidies often worked in the royal interest, for many of these lawyers entered royal service and quickly acquired high posts in the royal administration. Ruy García de Villalpando, for example, appears in the Seville accounts in 1412 as letrado of Seville, bachiller en leyes, and lieutenant to the alcalde mayor. In 1414 a royal writ ordered the town officials to pay 5,000 maravedís towards the expenses of his doctorate. To this sum the grateful officials added another 100 doblas moriscas. By the 1420s Ruy García de Villalpando was a royal judge in the audiencia. Subsequently, he became a member of the royal council and held an important post in Toledo, before coming to grief in the political disturbances of 1453.³

For the patrician officials, contact with the court might also mean the acquisition of a prestige post at court such as that of maestresala del rey.⁴ Sometimes officials /

1 See, for example, Table XXV-A, below p. 604

2 For example, the payments of the doctoral expenses of Luis Sánchez, bachiller en leyes, and Martín Sánchez, licenciado en leyes: A.M.S., caja 1400-1, nos. 19, 52.

3 See A.M.S., caja 1412-13, nos. 98, 107; caja 1414-15, no. 23; C.D.R.A.H., 55-6 (xxx, 1453); Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp. 30-1. Two of his contemporaries at Seville - Luis Sánchez and Velasco Gómez - also did well and gained high office in the royal audiencia.

4 The number of maestresalas who were also regidores is striking but in no case have I evidence for which post was acquired first.

officials were given mercedes of royal revenues. In Seville, for example, the wife of a deceased regidor was given the royal profits of justice in Seville.¹ In Córdoba, a regidor and his brother gained the royal share in the salines of Córdoba.² The Zurita family of Jerez, some of whose members spent a great deal of time at court, were given a grant of royal revenue in Jerez which remained in their family for more than four centuries.³

ii) Land, marriage, and nobility. Living nobly.

Once in office the ability to gain nobility in a truly successful way depended on a variety of complex factors which are not easily defined. Identification with the military characteristics of nobility, ownership of land, marriage, and the ability to 'live nobly' all played a part in this complex process. Not all these factors were necessary for success: equally no one factor by itself was sufficient to guarantee it.

The simplest way of acquiring quasi noble status was by entering the ranks of the caballeros de cuantía. Without actually possessing noble status these commoner knights enjoyed /

1 A.M.S., caja 1410-11, no. 178. These were only worth 8,000 mrs. per year.

2 Fernán Páez de Castillejo, maestresala del rey and veinticuatro of Córdoba, and his brother Juan Fernández: A.M.C., Sec. 6, Salinas, no. 1, 20 Aug. 1401.

3 Sancho, Historia, i. 89.

enjoyed the privileges of nobility in return for maintaining a horse and weapons for the performance of military service.¹ The selection of these knights was controlled by the town councils and the process could prove extremely useful to the patricians as the following royal letter illustrates.²

Don Juan etc ... Be it known that the jurados of this said city [Jerez] ... sent their petitions to me and, among other things, they informed me about ... the old ordinance issued by the kings from whom I am descended ... In effect any citizen or inhabitant whose wealth is worth six thousand ms of moneda vieja can be a caballero de cuantía and is to maintain continually weapons and a horse for my service and defence of the land. From the day on which he is assessed as a caballero he is to enjoy, from that day on, all the privileges which the other caballeros de cuantía of this city enjoy. This assessment of the caballeros was always carried out by the jurados of this city ... and a caballero assessed in this way was presented in your council house by the jurados of the district in which he lives. But now recently some of you [i.e. regidores alcaldes, etc.] ... interfere in this process ... and present your relatives, dependents, and allies in your council house as caballeros de cuantía ... men who are not assessed to have the said horses and [who you present] in order that they may enjoy and share out the offices which belong to the caballeros de cuantía ... Yet when the time comes for them to perform military service they say that they are not obliged to do this service because they say that they do not have the necessary wealth ... And I deemed this petition to be good and it is my wish that the said ordinance be observed ...

In /

1 See above pp. 108-111

2 A.M.J., Actas Caps., fol. 14R, 1426, 15 Sept. 1420.

In short this process allowed an individual to gain office by the technical qualification of being a caballero de cuantía. Yet such a caballero was not a true noble and, once in office, an attempt was made to retain the status without the obligations which revealed non-noble origins. Instead of being a means to nobility this process was rather a means of controlling the patronage machine of town government.

The individuals who claimed they were not rich enough to maintain a horse would not, however, have objected to performing military service in return for royal tierra - that is, the Castilian version of the money fief.¹ On the whole these money fiefs were held by nobles. Yet there were exceptions to this generalization. A jurado of Córdoba, for example, could receive tierra payments although technically he was an elected representative of the hombres buenos pecheros of his district.² Hence some regidores managed to obtain these money fiefs. Probably this was a result of contact with the court since, in some cases, tierra and mercedes were paid together.³ The amounts of the money fiefs varied. A regidor of Ubeda, for example, received only 3,000 mrs per /

1 See above pp 153-4

2 The example is taken from A.D.M., Priego, leg. 38, doc. 38, accounts of 1390.

3 Order to pay tierra and mercedes to Diego Rodríguez de Cuadros, regidor: A.M.S., caja 1400-1, no. 22. Data on tierra and mercedes held by officials of Seville: A.G.S., Libro de Rentas, 1440, fols. 73V-74R.

per year for two lances while Alfonso Fernádes de Melgarejo, regidor of Seville, received 19,500 mrs per year for thirteen lances.¹ But in either case the social benefits were clear. The possession of tierra identified the regidor with the real nobility and allowed him to acquire the characteristic which to a certain extent still divided 'those who fought' from the rest of society.

The ownership of real land, however, still seems to have been one of the key factors in the social success of patricians throughout the kingdom. In the extreme north, in Bilbao, the mercantile patrician oligarchy seems to have invested considerable money in landed property for, if they continued to invest primarily in shipping, they were also the owners of sizeable properties in the hinterland.² In the extreme south, round Cádiz, Jerez, Puerto de Santa María, and Seville, patrician families such as the Dávilas, Spinolas, and Adornos also acquired extensive rural possessions.³ This was an essential part of the art of 'living nobly', as well as being a safe investment. In the south, as in the north, it allowed the patrician to acquire respectability. Thus, in 1440, Pedro Fernández de /

1 A.G.S., D.de C., leg.6, no.167, 2 Feb.1444 and ibid, Exp. Hac., leg.1, no.132, 14 May 1465. Both these are poderes by the regidores acknowledging payment from third parties and empowering them to collect the necessary assignments at court.

2 García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.320.

3 See Sancho, Historia, i.88 and Sancho, Los Genoveses en Cádiz, p.11. It is also significant that, during the crisis of 1473, many of Seville's officials could promise delivery of substantial amounts of grain: A.M.S., caja 1473-4, 'Relacion del pan ...', 20 Aug.1473.

de Marmolejo's part in the farm of the alhóndiga revenues of Seville was not that of a tax farmer: instead, as 'Señor' of Alcalá de Juana de Horta and as regidor of Seville, he acted as guarantor.¹

The example of the converso and financier family of the Marmolejos helps to illustrate the possibilities presented by marriage. It has already been noted that by 1410 the descendants of John I's financier had made a marriage alliance with the family of the converso financier Nicolas Martínez.² The advantages of such an alliance are neatly symbolized by the fact that within two years the two mayordomos of Seville (one hidalgo and the other ciudadano) were to be drawn from the Martínez and Marmolejo families respectively.³ Yet this was only a beginning for, by the 1440s, Pedro Fernández de Marmolejo, regidor, had married a noblewoman - doña María de Mendoza, sister of the archbishop of Santiago de Compostela.⁴ Furthermore one of the daughters by this marriage later married don Pedro Núñez de Guzmán, one of the great landed nobility who also held the office of alguacil mayor of Seville.⁵ Clearly, by entry into the patrician oligarchy, acquisition /

1 A.G.S., Libro de Rantas, 1440, fol. 60V.

2 See above pp. 370-2

3 A.M.S., caja 1412-13, no. 9, royal letter, 8 July 1412, confirming the appointments. The fact that Martínez was the noble mayordomo and Marmolejo the citizen mayordomo had no real social significance.

4 This marriage is attested by the papers relating to the inheritance of the archbishop's shares in the soap monopoly: A.D.M., Alc. Duc., leg. 5, docs. 30-33, 7 Oct. 1447-12 July 1448.

5 See the sales of the Marmolejo soap shares ibid., leg. 56, doc. 10, transactions dated 8 Jan. and 2 March 1468.

acquisition of land, and favourable marriages, the example of the Marmolejos was one of complete success.¹

Not all patrician families could be as successful as the Marmolejos. Marriages between patrician families were, of course, frequent. Moreover many a family whose economic position was shaky found it necessary to marry into a rich family of lower status, thus infusing the urban oligarchy with fresh blood and wealth. This was particularly true of the Jerez and Cádiz areas where the indigenous patrician families tended to be relatively poor in comparison with the rich Genoese families. Since the former controlled the patronage of urban offices and the latter were wealthy, such marriages were mutually advantageous. In Jerez, for example, the Villavicencio family married into the wealthy Zacarías family and, as will be seen, the number of such marriages in Cádiz was quite considerable.²

The final factor of importance was the ability to live nobly. It is difficult to give a precise definition on this point and a detailed example will give a better impression. For this purpose evidence given to royal financial /

1 Further data on the Marmolejo family connections in the Instrucción del Relator, ed. Manuel Alonso, p.352.

2 For the Villavicencio - Zacarías marriage, Sancho, Historia, i.88. For Cádiz see below

financial officials as to the general reliability of guarantors of tax farms is admirable. The example chosen deals with two members of the Santillán family who acted as guarantors for Pedro González de Bahamón. Members of the Santillán family - a converso family - are to be found as regidores and jurados of Seville throughout the fifteenth century.¹ They were also involved, as this example shows, in the farms of the royal revenues:-

Information. Transcript of the information of Pedro González de Bahamón,² collector of the three quarter parts of the area of Jerez for this year of our lord of one thousand four hundred and sixty seven.

In the town of Ocaña [30/12/1476] before Alfonso de Quintanilla³ and Francisco Fernández de Sevilla,⁴ contadores of the king ... there appeared Antón Sanches, citizen of the city of Seville, on behalf of Pedro González de Bahamón, veinticuatro and citizen of the said city. He stated ... that since the said Pedro González was named as collector ... for this year ... he did give and gave the sureties contained below. Therefore he said to the said contadores that he asked them and required them to issue the [appropriate letter] and he presented as witnesses for information of the sureties ... Alfonso Alvares de Alcalá and Francisco Fernández, veinticuatro, and Pedro López, jurado, citizen of the said city. Oaths were taken from these witnesses according to the correct procedure

P. Diego de Santillán citizen	
of the said city of Seville	
to the amount of ...	150,000 <u>mrs</u>
P. Gómez de Santillán, citizen	
of the said city to the amount of	60,000 <u>mrs</u>

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- 1 From, for example, Alfonso Fernández de Santillán, jurado in 1416-17 to Fernando de Santillán, regidor in the nómina of 1452-3 in Table XXV-A.
 - 2 See above pp. 372-3.
 - 3 This is the Quintanilla who later became one of the chief administrators of the Catholic sovereigns.
 - 4 A converso who later became contador mayor and whose connections and finances were exceedingly complicated. His brother, Diego de Susán, had been mayordomo of Seville two years previously.

The said Alfonso Alvares de Alcalá, witness on oath. Asked on his oath if he knows the said Pedro González de Bahamón and the said ... guarantors replied that he did know them. Asked how he knew them he replied because he has seen them and talked with them many times and because they are citizens of the said city of Seville. Asked ... if he knows that the said guarantors ... are good men of good reputation, and possessors of wealth to the totals for which each one is standing as surety ... he [the witness] replied ... that they are men who live like escuderos and hidalgos. Their business is that of escuderos and they own horses and weapons and harness and silver on which they eat. Asked if he knows what properties each one of them possesses he replied that he knows that the said Gómez de Santillán owns houses and an hacienda of olive trees, grain land, and oil mills in San Lúcar la Mayor, a town of the said city of Seville, which could be worth 500,000 mrs. He said he knows this and knows that it is his property because he inherited it from his father, Doctor Diego Rodríguez de Santillán. Moreover he is not a man who has it mortgaged for debts owing to the king or any other person, and he bears witness that he possesses it peacefully as his own property.

As for the said Diego de Santillán [the witness gave this evidence]. He said ... that concerning the properties which he [Diego de Santillán] now possesses in the said city of Seville and its land, he has heard it said and indeed knows it to be true that his mother and two sisters own some houses in Seville and two hundred aranzadas of olive plantations with a house and mill in Salteras, a place in the territory and lands of the said city, and grain land capable of producing twenty cahices of grain per year (so it is said and he believes it to be so) in the Vega of Triana. All this may be worth, more or less, 900,000 mrs but it is not shared out ... but belongs to the said /

1 He appears on most of the nóminas of Seville salaries for the 1440s.

said Diego de Santillán, his mother and sisters all together and they own it jointly. Over and above this the said Diego de Santillán receives the revenues of the encomienda of Usagre which is in the provincia of León, is part of the order of Santiago, and may be worth 60,000 mrs per year. He [the witness] regards him [Santillán] as living like a man of substance with escuderos, horses, mules, and a black slave continually at his spurs, and that this is what he knows by the oath which the said Alfonso Alvarez swore.

The said Pedro López, jurado, witness on oath ... he said that he knows all the persons mentioned. He knows that the said Pedro González de Dahamón is an honourable man who makes his living by tax collecting, and he has been known all his life to be in this situation. And the said Diego de Santillán and Gonzalo de Santillán are honourable men who live by the business of escuderos and caballeros, having others who accompany them in their houses [households] and each one of them seen on horseback - sometimes on mules and sometimes on horses - and accompanied like men of substance.

[This witness confesses that he can only give vague evidence as to the properties involved].

The said Francisco Fernández de Sevilla, veinticuatro, witness on oath ... He said that he knows the said Pedro González, who is a good man and lives by tax collecting, and the said Diego de Santillán and Gómez de Santillán, who live cleanly like caballeros and escuderos and with horses, weapons, and other men who accompany them.

Concerning Diego de Santillán ... he said that he knows that his father, Doctor Ruy García /

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- 1 This bears witness to the accuracy of such evidence for, as has been noted, the accounts of Santiago for this same year show the income of this encomienda at 70,000 mrs per year. See above p. 325
 - 2 He appears on most of the nóminas of Seville salaries for the 1440s as alcalde de la justicia.

García, left a property of olive plantations and houses, and some other houses in Salteras, a place of Seville, which is worth more than 200,000 mrs. But that this property is not only his but also belongs to his brothers and mother. Furthermore there are some houses in Seville in the district of Santa Gruz in which the mother lives which are worth 300,000 mrs. or more. The mother, the said Diego de Santillán, and another sister of his, also own grain land in the Vega of Triana but he does not know what share of this falls to the said Diego de Santillán, although he believes that more than 100,000 mrs. of its value could be his portion; and from his personal effects and other belongings more than 100,000 mrs.

As far as the said Gómez de Santillán is concerned, he said that he knows that he inherited property from his father, Doctor Diego Rodríguez, which is worth more than 10,000 of the current doblas ... Furthermore that his properties are worth more than 200,000 mrs. in personal effects, lands, and houses and that these properties consist of olive plantations, houses, and grain land in Seville; but he does not know the places where they are situated

This passage needs little comment. At no point is it categorically stated that the guarantors are definitely nobles. Yet the whole impression - horses, arms, land, silver plate, a black slave in attendance - is one of men who live nobly and whose living is made in the manner of nobles. Not all patricians involved in finance were, of course, so flatteringly described by witnesses. Alvaro Garanito, regidor of León, for example, had characteristics in common with the Santillán guarantors. The evidence of witnesses /

witnesses showed that he was the owner of some valuable houses in the plaza of San Isidoro in León worth roughly 150,000 mrs. He also had 'vassals and lands' outside the town, in Vega de Cervera, worth some 300,000 mrs. Yet the witnesses at no point said that he lived nobly. He was merely a regidor with vassals and lands. In his case, moreover, there was a peculiar insistence on the fact that the lands he inherited from his father did not constitute a mayorazgo. Since mayorazgos were usually the preserve of the nobility the implication was clear - this regidor had still not managed to acquire the ethos of nobility.¹ In the case of the Santillán guarantors, however, the point about mayorazgos was not even mentioned.²

The study of the oligarchies shows that in the towns patrician families could hope through time to be accepted into the ranks of the nobility. Financial success, accompanied by investment in land, could be translated into acquisitions of hereditary offices, contact with the court and the nobility, successful marriage alliances, and even nobility.

Once again, however, it must be stressed that these patrician families entered the nobility surreptitiously. Many /

1 See ibid, fols.13R-14V, información Saldaña, 6 March 1467.

2 Despite the fact that in the case of Diego de Santillán it was abundantly clear that the lands did not constitute a mayorazgo.

Many of these families had to enter into litigation over their hidalguía in the sixteenth century. The case of the Riquelmes is interesting. This family belonged to the patrician oligarchy of Jerez, founded a sumptuous private chapel in the church of San Mateo, and owned one of the finest Jerez houses in the plaza del Mercado. Forced to pay some taxes by discerning tax officials, the family had to fight their case in the royal audiencia until they finally gained the necessary judgement, in 1570, which legally backed up their claims to nobility. The case of the Riquelmes was not exceptional. Many families were to find their noble status investigated both by financial officials and officials of the Inquisition.¹

As a result of pressures from the Crown and patricians, the problems of office and office holding also began to assume serious proportions. The vast majority of urban offices passed from father to son along with other family possessions, even if royal confirmation was necessary.² Indeed, at the end of the century, when the officials of the Inquisition confiscated the wealth of town /

1 Sancho, Historia, I.92 cites several families of Jerez who, like the Riquelmes, suffered the same indignities.

2 For examples involving the patrician families of Seville - Medina, Mendoza, Melgarejo, Barba - see A.M.S., caja 1414-15, no.102; caja 1418-19, 9 Dec.1418; ibid, folder 23, doc.4; caja 1445-6, 6 April 1444. Seville was no exception: see Col.Dip.Carmona, p.81, 14 Oct.1471.

town officials they also claimed to dispose of the office as well, since they regarded it as part of the accused's private patrimony.¹ The supply of offices, however, could not keep pace with demand. The hereditary links of officeholding only broke down occasionally. There were too few offices available to supply the rewards which the Crown granted to officials and to meet the demands of wealthy families excluded from office. The Crown solved its problem by the simple expedient of creating new offices - a situation approximating to the creation and sale of offices, since the reward of an office can clearly be regarded as a part of the Crown's hidden revenue. As a result contemporaries referred to offices del número antiguo and the new offices del número acrecentado.² Royal promises to reduce the number of offices were often made but never carried out.³ On the other hand wealthy families could not create offices for themselves and hence it is not surprising that there are clear signs that the sale of offices was not uncommon.⁴

A /

1 Márquez, ubi supra, pp.524-5.

2 See, for example, the royal privilege to Luis de Monsalve granting him a veinticuatria over and above those already in existence: A.M.S., caja 1445-6, 28 Feb. 1466.

3 The problem was further aggravated when rival factions at court appointed their own candidates. See, for example, ibid., caja 1420-1, letter by John II, 31 May 1420, confirming all officeholders in the royal council, audiencia, and towns who had gained office either from Catherine of Lancaster, or Ferdinand of Antequera, or the royal council.

4 For an example see Márquez, ubi supra, p.525, note 96.

A final factor of the system was the tendency of urban officials to form political alliances with the great noble families of their regions.¹ All these aspects of the patronage system of officeholding were appreciated by the Crown. In the ordinances of Guadalajara of 1436, for example, John II referred to these problems:-

I order ... that wherever offices of town government fall vacant through renunciation, death, or any other cause, they are to remain vacant until the number of offices is reduced to the number existing at the time when King Henry my father ... died. Those who acquire urban offices ... are not to be accepted into these offices until they swear ... in the council ... to which they are appointed ... that they did not give, promise, or intend to give anything for these offices.

Furthermore I order ... that renunciations of offices are not to be accepted or issued ... save from father to son and only when it is according to my pleasure ... the son being fit for office and this office not exceeding the old number of offices.

Item. That no regidor live with another regidor of the city, town, or place where he is regidor; nor is he to hold land, privileges, or money from him, for if he does he will lose his office ipso facto.

6)/

1 See below pp. 526-9.
2 B.N., MS., 13259, fol. 186R.

6) The Merchants

i) The Burgos merchants

Burgos provides the best example of a Castilian town with a powerful native merchant class. It is true that in other towns native merchants formed more or less powerful groupings. In Andalusia, especially, the Castilians provided bankers, financiers, and merchants of substance who played a vital role in international trade.¹ Indeed, even the duke of Medina Sidonia and the count of Niebla had ships trading in regions as far apart as the Canary Islands and London.² Nor should the role of the Jews as merchants and financiers be forgotten, as the famous example of Luis de Santángel and Christopher Columbus illustrates.³ Yet, however important in the south, the native merchants were overshadowed by the Genoese and a good many of the merchants in the other towns of Castile were linked to the Burgos merchant class. The burgaleses moreover, were to be found operating in most of the important economic centres from Seville to Flanders.

The reasons for the economic predominance of Burgos are well known. The town was situated on the Santiago pilgrim /

1 See, for example, the involvement of the Sevillian Gonzalo Díaz de Rota in trade to Southampton and the Canary islands: A.P.S., iii. Francisco Sánchez, fols. 5, 18 (Jan., Feb., 1472).

2 See above §. 150.

3 Santángel, secretary to Ferdinand, and the Genoese Francisco Pinelo helped to finance Columbus' first voyage.

pilgrim route, was the political 'capital' of the kingdom, was at the centre of communications to the ports of the north coast, and was the controlling centre of the wool export trade. This latter factor was the most important and led to the rise of native merchants who soon replaced the foreign merchants who had been attracted to Burgos. In a very real sense the wool trade was the trade of Burgos. Every year the wool clipped in the sierra was collected and exported by the Burgos merchants and their associates to Flanders. As long as there was a sustained demand for wool in Flanders, the Burgos merchants prospered.¹

By the fifteenth century, however, the Burgos merchants had developed interests in other activities and they are to be found dealing in all kinds of business from Andalusian olive oil to the royal minting houses.² In Seville, for example, the Burgos men formed the largest colony of native merchants and, by the second half of the century, the more powerful Burgos merchants probably had resident factors there.³ In 1489, for example, a Burgos merchant /

1 M. Basas Fernández, El consulado de Burgos, pp.29-30, 85, 155-6.

2 See, for example, the transaction involving two Burgos merchants in A.P.S., iii. Pedro García, fol.7V (26 March 1489) and the offer, made by Burgos merchants in the 1440s, to farm the royal mints and produce twice as much coinage at fixed prices over ten years, in A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.56.

merchant, Juan de Nájera, was acting as factor for the powerful family of the Pardos and his activity covered substantial bulk purchases and sales of Andalusian leather, Málaga almonds, and dye for the cloth industry.¹ It is possible that there even existed a conscious rivalry with the Genoese.

The organization of the Burgos merchants during the late middle ages still remains far from clear. After the union of Aragon and Castile a consulado was set up in Burgos, in 1494, on the pattern of the already existing consulados of Barcelona and Valencia. Yet the consulado created in 1494 was obviously the confirmation, in a new form, of a merchant guild which had clearly existed for some time.²

According to one author the merchant guild of Burgos may have existed as early as the fourteenth century since Castilian merchants, based on Burgos, possessed a guild in Flanders by at least 1336.³ This attempt to prove the existence of the Burgos guild by reference to Flemish documentation has also led to an over conservative estimate which dates the Burgos guild from 1455.⁴ It is certain that /

1 See A.P.S., iii. Antón Ruiz de Porras, fol. 71 (18 May 1489), fol. 210 (21 Oct. 1489), fol. 275 (24 Nov. 1489).

2 Smith, The Spanish Guild Merchant, chap. 1.

3 Ibid., pp. 41-3.

4 Basas, op.cit., 30-3.

that an association of merchants with a prior and consuls existed in 1447.¹ The religious confraternity of merchants, which later became a guild, probably existed at the beginning of the century.²

The very terminology applied to the association of Burgos merchants - gremio, república, hermandad, cofradía - showed the strong mixture of merchant guild and religious confraternity. Its power, however, marked it off from other artisan and merchant guilds. In the first place it was not restricted to Burgos merchants. In 1455, following a dispute in Flanders between Burgos and Basque merchants, Henry IV created two 'national' associations of merchants. The Burgos association covered towns south of the Ebro river and hence merchants from Toledo, Segovia, Soria, Medina del Campo, Logroño and other towns could belong to the Burgos guild. It was understood, of course, that the term 'merchant' did not include a simple artisan or retailing merchant but only those dealing in imports and exports. The relationship of the other towns to Burgos was not a mere formality. The activities of the wool trade ensured that the relationship was kept in existence. Moreover Burgos attracted merchants from other towns since it also seems to have acted as an economic clearing house when /

1 Ibid, p.51 where a letter of John II is cited which refers to the prior and consuls. The names of some of the priors and consuls, prior to the official creation in 1494, are known for the years 1453-4, 1483, and 1485.

2 Ibid, pp.50, 186.

when the fair of Medina del Campo was not in being.¹

From at least 1447 onwards a prior and two consuls existed. No detailed information has been found which throws light on their powers and jurisdiction, but they were probably the same as those established at the end of the century since reference was then made to pre-existing custom and practice.² Certainly these officials had some powers of mediation and arbitration. In 1483, for example, a dispute between two merchants, over the accounts of the company which they had formed, was referred to the prior and consuls of the guild for their determination.³

From the economic point of view the guild organized the wool exports. The ordinances of 1494 clearly stated that they confirmed the existing practice whereby the prior and consuls arranged for shipping contracts and insurance on the north coast and notified the merchants of all the towns concerned of the dates of sailing.⁴ Indeed the very problem of the sailing dates of the merchant fleets necessitated the existence, at an early date, of an organization inland which would ensure that the arrival of wool at the ports coincided with fleet departures.

1 Ibid, pp.50-1 and A.G.S.,Exp.Hac.,leg.2,no.96, which records a wide variety of transactions and bills of exchange, all of which were drawn up in Burgos.

2 Basas, op.cit.,p.51.

3 Ibid, pp.107-8.

4 Ibid,p.156.

ii) The Basque shippers

The merchants of Burgos and their associates used the north coast ports for exporting their goods, yet the northern shippers and merchants never allowed themselves to be dominated by their hinterland.

Above all the men of the north coast were shippers rather than merchants. Society in these northern areas of the kingdom lived perpetually at subsistence level and this both had special effects on social structure and also made this society dependent on trade. Thus foodstuffs had to be imported from central Castile and from abroad, and the very dependence on these imports made it seem natural that the nobility should play a part in trade.¹ In return the men of the north coast could offer fish and iron. Yet trade remained a secondary activity for the prosperous shippers. Indeed conditions in the northern areas, from Galicia to Fuenterrabia, were not conducive to the rise of a merchant class. There was a lack of a strong urban framework. Bilbao, the most important commercial centre of the north, with only some 5,700 inhabitants, could hardly compare with Toledo or Salamanca. Lack of a market demand led the northerners to become transporters of goods rather than merchants whose activities were based on their own regions.²

The /

1 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.151-3.

2 Ibid, pp.72-3, 186. See also above p.85

The shipping tradition was strongest among the Basques. From an early date shipbuilding and navigation were stimulated by Bilbao's advantage of possessing a sheltered port. It was Basque ships which carried Burgos wool to Flanders and returned with cloth to supply the Castilian demand at the fairs of Medina del Campo.¹ Burgos merchants in effect were using a Basque carrying trade. From this stage it was perhaps natural that the Basques, like the Bretons, should become shippers between areas unconnected with the north coast of Castile. Their carrying trade is said to have extended from Alexandria to the North Sea, but the bulk of their carrying trade was confined to the Atlantic and the western Mediterranean.²

In the Atlantic, the Basques were greatly helped by the naval predominance which they established as part of the Castilian contribution to the French alliance during the Hundred Years War.³ By the mid-fourteenth century they were masters of the sea route to Flanders and had eliminated the Hansa from the Bay of Biscay and the western coast of France.⁴ Moreover, despite piracy and naval warfare, they managed to control a good deal of the Gascon wine /

1 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.168-94; Vicens, Manual, pp.293-4; Smith, op.cit., chap.v.

2 García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.153,258.

3 A detailed study of political, diplomatic, and naval strategy in L.Suárez Fernández, Navegación y Comercio (Madrid,1959).

4 Ibid, chap.viii passim; García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.212-3; Konetzke op.cit., pp.38-9; the text of the treaty of 1443 in P.Dollinger, La Hanse (Paris,1964), pp.479-81.

Gascon wine trade with England and, after diplomatic blunders by Louis XI in 1463, Basque activity in English ports increased substantially during the latter half of the century.¹

The Basque carrying trade in the Mediterranean, though not so well established as in the Atlantic, seems to have gained momentum towards mid-century.² As early as 1403, for example, the Albertini of Florence used a fleet matriculated in Bilbao for trade with Flanders and in Seville the Basque presence can be documented throughout the period.³ Their carrying trade covered Sicily, Sardinia, Barcelona, Marseilles, and Genoa.⁴ For at least twenty years (1445-65), for example, Basque ships supplied Genoa with salt from Ibiza and Tortosa, and with wheat from Sicily.⁵ The Basques, however, never supplanted the Italians on the Mediterranean - Atlantic route and their appearance in the Mediterranean was partly due to exceptional circumstances such as the schism, Alfonso V's attack on Marseilles, and the economic decline of Catalonia. By the beginning of the reign of the Catholic sovereigns, Basque activity in the Mediterranean had declined /

1 García de Cortazar, *op.cit.*, pp.188-90, 258-9.

2 See J.Heers, 'Le commerce des basques en Méditerranée', *B.Hisp.*, lviii(1955), 292-324.

3 See, for example, A.M.S., caja 1400-1, no.25, requisition of a Basque ship by the Castilian admiralty, and caja 1471-2, accounts presented by Medina Sidonia, 11 Nov.1471, showing the requisition of Basque ships for war against the marquis of Cadiz.

4 García de Cortazar, *op.cit.*, pp.194-5.

5 *Ibid.*, pp.263-4; Heers, *Gênes*, pp.282, 354-6.

declined and was mainly restricted to Catalonia.¹

The organization of the north coast maritime interests was curious in that it contained widely divergent elements. Originally confraternities had been organized which included all those who made a living from the sea (mareantes). Thus these cofradías or hermandades included both simple fishermen and sailors as well as the rich shipbuilders and owners some of whom were also merchants. At first there was one hermandad in each port which existed separately from the town council.² From the late thirteenth century, however, these hermandades began to fuse together until finally there was one hermandad which covered the whole north coast from Fuenterrabía to Bayona in Galicia.³ This hermandad has aptly been compared with the Hansa. Control naturally fell to the powerful Basque shippers and, at times, this Castilian Hansa, like the German Hansa, virtually acted as an independent political power. This independence, and the identification of naval power with the carrying trade, can be seen, for example, in the treaty between Edward III and the north coast hermandad in which the Castilian monarchy played no part.⁴

1 Heers, ubi supra, passim; Suárez, Navegación, p.75; García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.264.

2 Ibid, p.117; Vicens, Historia, ii.190-1.

3 The documents of the archivo de protocolos in Seville do, in fact, show that merchants and shippers came from places like Fuenterrabía, Castropol, and Motrico as well as from Bilbao.

4 See Suárez, Navegación, pp.14-15; T.Maza Solano, 'Manifestaciones de la economía montañesa', in Aportación al estudio ... de la montaña, ed. Banco de Santander (Santander, 1957), pp.188-201.

The role of the Basques as international shippers and the existence of a powerful hermandad provided the means to resist a threat of total domination by the Burgos merchants. This tension between the merchant interest of central Castile and the shippers of the north coast was mainly a struggle between Burgos and Bilbao. The nature of the problem is best illustrated by reference to the organization of Castilian merchants abroad and to the clash of interests within the kingdom itself.

In several foreign ports Castilian merchants, including Basques, enjoyed special privileges which helped to differentiate their colonies from those of other countries.¹ In hardly any of these ports, however, did these colonies constitute a truly autonomous group organized as a 'nation'. The great exception was Bruges which was the terminal point of Castilian exports of wool. As early as 1348 the Castilians at Bruges received a statute which gave them equivalent standing with the Hansa. By the fifteenth century the colony at Bruges formed a 'nation' with its own consulado.² From the middle of the century, however /

1 This was true for Nantes, La Rochelle, Rouen, Dieppe, Marseilles. For these and other ports see García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.241-4 and relevant references given there to the studies of Suárez and Mollat.

2 Suárez, Navegación, pp.15-16; García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.213. The consulado was legally recognised by Philip the Good in 1428.

however, it was clear that the Castilian 'nation' at Bruges was seriously divided by clashes between Castilians and Basques. In 1455, following a quarrel over the use of the nation's chapel and other facilities, Henry IV tried to solve this problem by forming two distinct communities at Bruges. Each community was to have four consuls - representing the 'Spanish nation' and 'the coast of Spain and Biscay' respectively. This division, which in effect formalized the clash between Burgos and Bilbao, was to last to the end of the century despite the fact that in 1467 the two 'nations' were once more theoretically unified.¹

The clash at Bruges reflected a similar struggle in Castile. Prior to 1494 the Bilbao shippers tried to ensure that all exports from the north coast were carried in ships belonging to their organization. As shippers they also demanded payment of harbour duties (avería) and tried to regulate freight charges. The Burgos merchants and their associates, on the other hand, wanted to have control over their own shipping arrangements and tried to negotiate independently with shippers without reference to the shipping association. In 1453, for example, the Burgos /

¹ Suárez, Navegación, pp.120-1; García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.212-229; Basas, op.cit., pp.37,155-61.

Burgos guild tried to contract separately with the port of Santander in an attempt to outflank the Bilbao control over the wool carrying trade to Flanders.¹ This tension between shipping and merchant interests continued well into the sixteenth century. During the reign of the Catholic sovereigns it became apparent that only a determined effort by the Burgos merchants would prevent a slow but steady rise in the migration of capital to Bilbao. It was this and other similar factors which led to the request in 1494 for the creation of the consulado in Burgos. This, along with royal irritation with the north coast Hansa, was the beginning of the end for the north coast hermandad, although inevitably Bilbao too gained its consulado shortly after, in 1515.²

iii) The Genoese and the south

As well as the Genoese a wide variety of other foreign merchants were to be found involved in the economy of fifteenth century Andalusia. References to individual merchants from places like Milan, Marseilles, or Piedmont are scattered over the century.³ Some 'nations' formed small /

1 Smith, op.cit., chap.v; Basas, op.cit., pp.201-2.

2 See especially Smith, op.cit., pp.41-3 and García de Cortazar, op.cit., pp.187-8, 215.

3 See, for example, A.P.S., iii. Francisco Sánchez, fols. 26, 31 (2 and 3 April 1472); ibid, iv. Pedro Álvarez, fol.310V (18 June 1480).

small colonies. Venetians and Florentines are to be found in Seville.¹ English and Breton merchants, on the other hand, were to be found in the seaports of Sanlúcar de Barrameda and Cádiz rather than in economic centres such as Seville and Jerez.² Though small in numbers, the importance of such groups could be substantial as the example of the Medici factor, Amerigo Vespucci, was to show after Columbus' first voyage. The Bretons, too, played a vital part in the carrying trade of the south along with the Basques.

Despite the activities of these small groups of merchants, however, Andalusia in fact tended to be an economic 'colony' of the Genoese seaborne 'empire'. Genoese activity in Castile dated from at least the twelfth century, but did not become really important till the later middle ages. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the Genoese helped the Crown to open the straits of Gibraltar. The 'transport revolution' which ensued, along with Genoa's loss of eastern colonies to the Turks, led the Genoese to concentrate part of their activities on Seville, which served as a stage on the route to England and /

1 The Florentines, however, seem to have preferred working through intermediaries. See, for example, Heers, Gênes, p.491, which shows the Centurioni acting on behalf of Florentines, and A.P.S., iv. Pedro Alvarez, fol.219 (7 Oct.1475) in which Francisco Bonaguise, Florentine merchant, has his interests represented by the Venetian, Pedro de Reconte.

2 On the Bretons see M.Bataillon, ubi supra, passim. For the English see A.P.S., iv. Pedro Alvarez, fols.364,369 (22 and 25 Aug.1480) and iii. Antón Ruiz de Porras, fol.129V (16 July 1489) which all deal with English merchants estantes en la villa de Sanlúcar.

and the Low Countries and also linked up the Genoese to the Andalusian economy.¹

The centre of Genoese activity in Andalusia, and indeed the whole of Castile, was Seville where from the reconquest there existed a special Genoese quarter or barrio de Genova.² It seems probable that the number of Genoese in Seville increased substantially during the fifteenth century.³ Other important centres of Genoese activity were Cádiz, Puerto de Santa María, and towns in the kingdom of Granada.⁴ No accurate assessment of the numbers of Genoese in Andalusia is at present possible. Lists of Genoese merchants supplying grain during agrarian crises, or paying forced loans imposed by the Catholic sovereigns, give some idea of the numbers of Genoese and also of the Genoese families concerned, of whom the most important seem to have been the Spinola, Centurione, Usodimare, Salvago, Nigro, Pinelli, Grimaldi, Lomellini, and Marinis.⁵ Some idea of the strength of the Genoese colony in Seville may be obtained by noting that, in the negotiations for importing grain in 1473, only two Florentine, two Venetian, and four English merchants were involved /

1 See J. Heers, 'Les Italiens et l'Orient Méditerranéen', vi. Cong. Hist. Aragon, pp.165-73; R. Pike, op.cit., pp.1-2; Y. Renouard, 'Lumières nouvelles sur les hommes d'affaires italiens', A.E.S.C., x(1955), 63-78.

2 R. Pike, op.cit., p.146, note 4; Heers, Gênes, p.487.

3 Pike, op.cit., p.1, estimates that the Genoese population doubled between 1450-1500.

4 See Heers, Gênes, p.477 and Sancho, Los Genoveses, passim.

5 The selection of these as the most important families is based purely on the impression given by the documents of the notarial and municipal archives. For lists of Genoese see Appendix AA below pp.617-22.

involved compared with thirty-eight Genoese.¹

Based on Seville and Andalusia, the Genoese nevertheless maintained contact with the centre of the kingdom. Their activity in Castile proper remains largely unknown, yet such evidence as there is suggests that their activity was not insignificant. Genoese companies certainly existed in Toledo and Valladolid since bills of exchange were assigned on them from Seville and even a place like Coca or Almadén could attract Genoese interest if the profits were large enough.²

The economic activity of the Genoese was wide ranging. Almost all the trade of the south was largely in their control. Thus the imports and exports - cochineal and orchil, wine, fruit, sugar, grain, olive oil, tunny, soap, leather, mercury, cloth, slaves, gold and silver - were part of the Genoese control over the Castilian share of international trade. The Centurione provide a good example to illustrate the wide range of interests of the Genoese merchants. Based principally on Genoa, the Centurione also had a second base in Seville where the family saw not only to their own affairs but also undertook /

1 Although not contracting to import grain, a further three Venetians subsequently unloaded cargoes in Seville. For the list of the Genoese and reference to the source material see Appendix AA below pp. 618-9, 622.

2 See, for example, Heers, Gênes, p. 491 and A.P.S., iv. Pedro Alvarez, fols. 244, 250 (27 Nov. and 1 Dec. 1475).

undertook commercial transactions on behalf of Florentines. North of Seville, the Centurione were the principal members of the company which held the monopoly of the mercury at Almadén - reflecting a similar position which they held with respect to the Tolfa alum mines.¹ They arranged exports of iron from the Basque provinces, signed commercial contracts which involved trading in Toledo, Medina del Campo, and Granada, and had extensive dealings in Cartagena and Valencia.² Indeed, trading links like these seem almost to have generated further ramifications in the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Atlantic. Christopher Columbus, after all, worked for the Centurione in Lisbon in 1478, and was sent by the Centurione to purchase sugar in Madeira where other powerful families, such as the Lomellini, had helped to revolutionize the island's economy by switching from grain to sugar production.³ Yet despite the widely separated areas concerned - the Canary islands, Cartagena, Málaga, Jerez, Almadén - the centre /

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- 1 After a period of exploitation by Catalans and by the Crown itself, the mines at Almadén were farmed out in 1387 to a Genoese consortium, based in Seville and made up of Simon Doria, Lario Damar, Napoleon Salvago, and Francisco de la Cheretia. The farm was only for a period of six years but the Genoese subsequently retained control throughout this period. See A. Matilla Tascón, Historia ... de Almadén, i.5-29; Heers, Gênes, p.490.
- 2 See ibid, pp.491-4, for the activities of Giovanni Batista in Seville and the Centurioni ramifications in Spain and north Africa.
- 3 See S.E. Morison, Admiral of the Ocean Sea (Boston, 1942), i.49; Heers, Gênes, p.495.

centre of operations was still located in Seville. Thus, although Seville was not an important seaport, the Genoese firms established themselves in Seville and maintained factors in seaports like Cádiz in order to take charge of their shipments.¹

The fact that Seville was the centre of Genoese commercial interests also made it a financial centre of considerable importance. The banking, exchange, and trading negotiations all centred round the cathedral in the Santa María district. It was here, in the calle de las gradas, that the lonja was situated. In many respects the lonja - the exchange or meeting place of merchants - was like the Rialto of Venice. Each day merchants assembled and on completion of a transaction, instead of money changing hands, reference was made to the money changers or bankers who were situated near the lonja, many of them keeping bank in the adjoining street significantly known as the calle de Genova.²

The proximity of merchants, bankers, and money changers /

1 Ibid, p.490.

2 The municipal financial officials used the Calle de Genova exchange rates for their calculations throughout the period: A.M.S., caja 1403-4, no.37, for example, contains the Calle de Genova exchange rate for doblas moriscas. As far as I know there exists no fifteenth century description of Gradass such as those in sixteenth century literature for which see R.Pike, op.cit., p.29, and Carande, Carlos V, i.316-9.

changers was not merely a matter of convenience for it seems that the Genoese often indulged in both trade and banking. The Centurione, for example, owned the largest bank in Genoa as well as running a vast trading enterprise. The creation of a private bank, based on a system of guarantors similar to that used for the farm of royal finances, consequently tended to be an additional enterprise undertaken by the successful merchants.¹ Trade, however, in many cases remained the primary interest of the Genoese merchant. But the complications involved in commercial transactions were often avoided in Seville by the two contracting parties making a mere oral declaration of transfer to one of the bankers in the calle de Genova. On a national and international level the deposit and transfer banks of Seville liquidated commercial debts by written bills of exchange, drawn on corresponding private banks in other towns or on the fairs of Medina del Campo. In addition to these straightforward commercial transactions there existed the more sophisticated, but less important, speculative dealings in bills of exchange which were in themselves profitable commodities.² It would, of /

1 See especially Heers, Gênes, pp.91-3 where the lack of distinction between trade and banking is emphatically underlined.

2 See R.Pike, op.cit., pp.84-5; Heers, Gênes, p.491; Carande, Carlos V, i.316-9. It should be stressed that very little is known about the ramifications of this seemingly simple structure. Virtually nothing, for example, is known about the corredores de lonja despite the fact that the corredores figure prominently in the documentation.

of course, be wrong to imply that all banking activities took place in Seville and that the Genoese controlled a monopoly. Yet it seems to be the case that, from the fourteenth century onwards, the Genoese gradually took over the main role in banking from the Jews, owing to their vast commercial network and their ability to transfer capital fairly rapidly.¹ Their activities were not confined to Seville, yet this city was the centre of their activities and they continued to play a vital part in the Spanish expansion of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²

How were the Genoese organized and what privileges did they enjoy? The answer to these problems is almost certainly contained in a register in the archive of Simancas which includes all the privileges granted by the Castilian kings to the Genoese. Without the data contained in this register only a fragmentary picture can be pieced together.³

The evidence certainly suggests that, from the reconquest of Seville, the Genoese were organized as a nation /

1 See Carande, 'Sevilla, fortaleza y mercado', A.H.D.E., ii(1925), 293; Sancho, Historia, i.69-71.

2 R.Pike, op.cit., passim.

3 During my stay at Simancas the register was apparently unavailable for consultation.

nation with their own consules. At the reconquest they obtained their own barrio or district, the organization of which was entrusted to Si or Sey Gallardo, the first Genoese consul in Seville. Among the privileges given to them in 1251 were the grant of their own church, the right of presenting their chaplain to the Archbishop, and the right to elect two consuls to judge all their own disputes apart from criminal cases. For the hearing of these disputes they were given a mosque which remained the property of Genoa down to the nineteenth century.¹

These same privileges, granted in the thirteenth century, probably still applied during the fifteenth century.² There is certainly no doubt as to the existence of Genoese consuls and they probably still dealt with disputes among the Genoese themselves, as well as representing their interests generally.³ There is also evidence /

1 Carle, 'Mercaderes en Castilla', C.H.E., xxi-xxii (1954), p.231; J.Gonzalez, Repartimiento de sevilla (Madrid, 1951), 1.337-41.

2 Royal statements on these matters tended to be extremely vague. However there must have been a need to confirm privileges at intervals since grants of safe conduct and protection - see, for example, A.G.S., D.de C., leg.4, no.102 - were limited in time.

3 See, for example, A.M.S., caja 1412-13, no.189 which includes a payment to micer antonio y talian consol delos genoveses desta cibdat The representative nature of the consuls is well illustrated in their resistance to arbitrary forced loans in 1489 and in their attempt to share the burden of these loans, once it became clear that they would have to be paid. Generally, the consuls are referred to as consuls of the Genoese or consuls of the lonja, but not as consuls of the Genoese nation. See A.P.S., iii. Antón Ruiz de Porras, fols.251V-252V, and 283.

evidence, however, that the Genoese enjoyed special privileges with respect to all legal disputes falling outside the competence of the consuls. So, at least, it appeared to the smaller tax farmers of the archbishopric of Seville, for they complained about the Genoese privileges to the Crown. According to them, the Crown had granted the Genoese the privilege of having all their cases heard by the royal asistente of Seville. This privilege, as the tax farmers pointed out, had the effect of lifting all cases involving the Genoese out of the ordinary courts and into the court of the asistente who, it was implied, was more than prejudiced in favour of the Genoese.¹

The point of the tax farmer's complaint was inevitably about tax avoidance, for

when they [the Genoese] are called before the ordinary judges on matters relating to the alcabalas, the said asistente issues an inhibition on the grounds that he has been entrusted with the cognizance of all their cases ...

Yet as far as fiscal privileges are concerned, the enjoyment of certain exemptions did not necessarily benefit the foreign merchant. The Genoese and other foreign merchants /

¹ The complaint is only one of several made by the tax farmers: A.G.S., Exp.Hac., leg.2, no.207.

merchants were certainly not normally exempt from the alcabala tax, which was the one tax which affected them most as merchants.¹ If they were not naturalized the Genoese and others were exempt from taxes such as the pedidos and monedas² but, as against this privilege, it must be remembered that the Genoese living in the south of the kingdom were the obvious choice for demands for forced loans. In 1489, for example, the Genoese in Seville alone were faced with a demand for a forced loan of 1,000,000 ms to help with the siege of Baza.³

iv) The merchant in society and urban government

It is usually accepted that Castilian merchants did not enter the patrician oligarchies and did not exercise any significant political control over their urban environment. Carande makes the point succinctly

He who studies the medieval towns of Castile ... is surprised by the fact that the citizens who were enriched by mercantile and industrial activities - the burgueses in the real sense of the word - carried very little weight in urban government.⁴

The same view is equally applicable to the merchants and the royal court.

It /

1 See, for example, A.P.S., iv. Juan García, fol.139V (14 Jan.1461), receipt by the farmer of alcabalas acknowledging full payment of alcabalas by Feligo Salvago, Genoese merchant, in gold, silver, and precious stones.

2 See, for example, the order of urban officials enforcing such an exemption in the case of a Piedmontese merchant: A.M.S., caja 1409-10, no.130.

3 See Appendix A^A below p.620.

4 Carande, Carlos V, i.154.

It is certainly true that it is hard to find examples of regidores who were at the same time important merchants. There are, of course, examples of such men. Diego de Soria, a powerful Burgos merchant and the man who presented the petition to the Crown requesting the creation of a consulado in Burgos, was also a regidor of the town.¹ In Seville, in the early fifteenth century, the town council appointed a cloth merchant, Juan Martínez, to the key financial office.² Moreover a hard pressed monarchy did on occasion turn to the merchants for loans and contact with the court was not unknown.³ Yet the surprising fact is that such examples are hard to find - even for economic centres of the importance of Burgos and Seville, despite the obvious architectural evidence of merchant prosperity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴

Nevertheless the view has been too simply stated and the problem needs to be examined with greater care. In the first place there were outstanding exceptions - towns in which merchants did control the oligarchies. In Bilbao and the other towns of the north coast there seems to be no doubt that the oligarchies were made up of powerful /

1 Basas, op.cit., pp.33,107.

2 A.M.S., caja 1401-2, no.74, order for all accounts to be submitted to Juan Martínez, appointed mayordomo de los propios.

3 The Crown usually turned to financiers involved in the royal tax farms rather than to merchants. But see, for example, A.M.S., caja 1452-3, royal order of 27 Sept.1444 to Seville to pay 105,000 mrs from pedido revenues to Tomás, mercadero florentyn, towards 1,000 doblas quele yo devo et me el presto ... et por ciertas joyas que compre de ciertas personas

3 See, for example, Carande on Burgos in Carlos V, i.271.

powerful merchant and shipping families.¹ In the extreme south, as Sancho de Sopranis shows,² Cádiz was to be dominated by Genoese merchant dynasties who married into the families of the local oligarchy and ended up in control of town government as well as economic life. In both cases, Bilbao and Cádiz, oligarchies existed which were markedly different from the situation prevailing inland where a lack of merchant power was the key feature. The explanation of these differences is to be found in the geographical location of Bilbao and Cádiz and in the prevailing set of values to which rich merchants aspired. In Bilbao and other north coast towns, an impoverished rural nobility aspired to merchant wealth and consequently moved to the towns to join the ranks of the merchants and ship-
pers.³ In Cádiz, an impoverished local complex of oligarchical families were suddenly connected to the possibilities presented by Genoese merchants with international contacts; throughout the fifteenth century Genoese money married into local urban office. But elsewhere in the kingdom, merchants, financiers, and conversos aspired to urban offices which they could only gain by betraying their background. This was true even of great economic centres /

1 García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.320.

2 Sancho, Los Genoveses, passim.

3 García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.320.

centres such as Burgos and Seville. For these towns were primarily political, administrative, and ecclesiastical capitals rather than economic capitals. Not unnaturally, therefore, examples of regidores who were also merchants are hard to find. But it is relatively easy to quote examples of patrician families with distant merchant backgrounds. In Burgos, for example, both the patrician families of the Frías and the Santamaría were cases of merchant families who had succeeded in gaining access to the patrician oligarchy but who had shed their background in the process.¹ The Santamaría family, indeed, adequately reflected the status of Burgos as a political and ecclesiastical capital by not only entering the oligarchy but also providing some of the most illustrious royal civil servants and ecclesiastics of Castile.²

Two further points serve to qualify the view of the merchants' complete lack of influence in town government. In the first place, the position could be totally different as far as some of the lesser urban offices were concerned.

Secondly, it must be remembered that merchants often became involved in other activities. Thus, at a lower level /

1 L.Huidobro y Serna, 'La noble familia de los Frías', B.R.A.H., cxiii(1948), 548; Vicens, Historia, ii.190.

2 Cantera Burgos, op.cit., passim.

level, there could exist an almost total lack of definition. If it was rare for a regidor to be a merchant, the same was not true of the lower reaches of public office. Two examples will illustrate this point.

The first example concerns a substantial merchant of Burgos, Pedro García de Medina, whose position in 1468 displayed a wide variety of activities. His property and houses in the calle de armas were worth between 70,000 and 100,000 ms. He was a member of the Burgos guild or cofradía by virtue of his local and international dealings in wool and cloth, and had formed a company with his father-in-law, Pedro García Salón, and others. As well as being a merchant, however, he was also an escribano público del número in Burgos - that is, one of the official public notaries, an appointment almost certainly at the disposal of the Burgos oligarchy. In the past he had been a minor official of urban taxes and had farmed some of the town's revenues. In 1468 he also became involved in royal finances as a tax farmer of the alcabalas and tercias.¹

In the same year another inhabitant of Burgos, Pedro González del Castillo, was involved in an equally bewildering /

¹ All this data in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 11, fols. 117R-118V which is an enquiry into García's wealth.

bewildering series of activities. His houses in the San Román district were estimated to be worth about 120,000 mrs. He owned land in Buñiel, an area south west of Burgos, for which he received a yearly rent from the council of Buñiel of thirty to forty cargas of grain, estimated to be worth about 90,000 mrs. To the east of the town, in Villayuda, he owned a mill worth about 40,000 mrs and providing an annual rent of sixty fanegas of flour and 1,000 mrs. Within the town, he owned a tile kiln worth between 40,000 and 50,000 mrs.¹ He had also invested capital in companies along with other merchants and was, in 1468, tax farmer of royal revenues in the merindad of Burgos.²

Office holding, tax farming, and landowning were not therefore incompatible with the activities of a merchant.³ Indeed it was this very diversity which allowed for social mobility of an intricate nature.⁴ If, for example, the family connections of Pedro García de Medina are examined, some curious changes in occupational role emerge. As has been noted, Pedro García de Medina was in partnership with his /

1 I assume that it was a tile kiln: 'tiene una tejera donde fassen vidriado en sus casas donde suelen morar quatro o cinco bascos'.

2 All this data in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 11, fols. 119R-120V.

3 Although the two examples quoted refer to Burgos, the same applied to other towns. See, for example, ibid, fols. 749R-750V for similar data on Gabriel Rodríguez and his son-in-law, Pero González Mellenque, merchants, landowners, and tax farmers in Seville.

4 The diversity of occupations made it difficult for contemporaries to describe how a man made his living. Pedro García de Medina, for example, was described as follows: 'bibe ... por trago de mercaderias et escribano publico desta dicha cibdad ... et que algunas veces lo ve tener cargo de rrentas en la dicha cibdad asy por fiel quello ponen dellas como poruelos arrienda'.

his father-in-law, Pedro García Salón, who was also a merchant. The latter's brother, however, entered the royal civil service, made a brilliant career for himself, and ended his days as a royal judge in the audiencia of Valladolid. The Salón family, therefore, remained involved in trade while one of its members entered the civil service. The ramifications later became even more complicated. The oidor married into the 'civil servant' family of the Miranda and subsequently links were also established with the Burgos patrician families of the Maluenda and the Santa María. Despite these marriages, however, some of the descendants of the oidor were still engaged in large scale trade in the early sixteenth century.¹ The very complexity of such relationships would seem to suggest a high degree of social mobility. Yet, as far as the transition from merchant, to oligarch, and finally to nobility is concerned, the process was similar to that for the financiers² and the obstacles may have been greater.

In the first place land was important. Even in Bilbao /

1 See A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 11, fols. 117R-118V and M. Basas, 'Los Miranda, mercaderes', B.I.F.G., xxxix (1960), 30-43. Basas traces the Miranda connections back to Gonzalo García de Paz Salón whose first son was the royal oidor and whose second son was Pedro García Salón. Since the document and the article both locate the residence of their respective Pedro Garcías Salón in the calle de armas, I have assumed they are one and the same person.

2 See above pp. 377-95.

Bilbao the merchant oligarchy retained a double identity as merchants (or shippers) and landowners. A dispute, in 1501, between Bilbao and its hinterland, over boundaries and jurisdiction, showed the results of this process. One of the allegations was that much of the land in dispute was being claimed by Bilbao precisely because 'rich merchants' had bought the land from impoverished rural hidalgos - land which subsequently entered the administrative area controlled by the Bilbao oligarchy. It was also subsequently alleged that the Bilbao merchants had bought the lands and entered them into the administrative area of Bilbao so that the produce could be imported into the town without hindrance.¹ As will be seen, this process of merchant investment in land also occurred in the south and also, doubtless, in other areas such as Burgos and Toledo.

There was also, as Sobrequez has pointed out, an almost natural law which attracted the successful merchant into the world of financiers - those who farmed the royal and urban revenues and lent money to the Crown and the towns.² From this point, the pattern of social mobility - entry into the urban oligarchy, marriage, nobility /

¹ See García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.79, note 130, and p.320.

² Vicens, Historia, ii.190.

nobility - was the same as has been indicated for the financiers.¹ It seems probable, for example, that Diego de Soria managed to combine his role as a merchant with that of regidor in Burgos precisely because he had married into the patrician family of the Maluendas.² There was, however, a difference between the position of the merchant and the financier. To succeed, the merchant on the whole had to opt out of trade unless he lived in an area like Bilbao or Cádiz. This was not necessarily true of the financier. Indeed precisely because this difference existed it seems probable that merchants turned to tax farming as a socially acceptable alternative to trade. This process is best illustrated with reference to the Genoese.

There seems to have been a radical difference between those Genoese families which settled in Castile and those which remained strongly linked to Genoa and returned there after winding up their affairs in Castile. The Franchy typify the latter kind of Genoese family. They came to Cádiz, stayed several years, built up a network in the south and in the Canary Islands and then retired to Genoa. It was a pattern common to many Genoese families. These /

1 See above pp. 377-95.

2 His wife was Catalina de Maluenda. See Basas, op.cit., p.33, note 58, and Cantera Burgos, op.cit., pp.403-4. The latter work has considerable data on the Maluenda family.

These families did not invest their money in land, did not try to enter urban oligarchies, were content to marry into other Genoese families, and played no part at all in urban or royal finances. They remained strictly merchant families.¹

Almost the exact opposite seems to have been the case for those Genoese families which settled in Castile.² In the case of Cadiz, it was perhaps possible to combine merchant activity with public office, as happened in the case of the Negro family.³ Elsewhere the Genoese families turned from trade completely, made suitable marriages, acquired public offices and land, and at times participated in the royal financial administration.⁴ Some of the Spinola /

1 See Sancho, Los Genoveses, p.15.

2 Almost all the successful examples concern the Genoese but the exceptional cases are also interesting. The Florentine Fantoni, for example, married into the Villavicencios of Cadiz and the mother of the celebrated Mateo Alemán, author of Guzmán de Alfarache, was a Florentine, married to a converso.

3 The Negro for long enjoyed the favour of the Medinaceli whom they served as factors and alcaldes in Puerto de Santa María. Subsequently they married into the Spinola family, invested in land, but were nevertheless active in the sugar trade during the late fifteenth century. Sancho, Los Genevoses, p.12; A.D.M., Cog., leg.14, doc.52, accounts for 1425-8.

4 Pike's assertion, op.cit., p.19, that the Genoese steered clear from the royal finances must be qualified with respect to those Genoese who were in the process of settling in Castile. From Gaspar Cibón, Sevillian tax collector in 1381, to Benito Castellón, treasurer of the alcabalas in 1501, the documents bear witness to occasional Genoese involvement in financial administration. For these examples see A.M.S., caja 1381-2, no.3; A.P.S., xv. Bernal Gonzalez, fol.267.

Spinola family settled in Castile and provide a good example. Agustín de Spinola was a regidor of Jerez, held office at court, and entered the military order of Santiago where he was given the encomienda of Almendralejo. He and his family owned considerable land round Jerez and even managed to found a mayorazgo. In other cases, such as that of the Zaccaria in Jerez, the male line died out and the social and economic power, gained originally through trade, passed to an indigenous oligarchical family with no merchant background.¹

The contrast between the Genoese merchant and the Genoese settled in Castile can best be seen in terms of entry into the urban oligarchy. As has been noted, Seville was the centre of Genoese commercial operations in the south of the kingdom: yet not one Genoese merchant seems to have gained a place in the Seville oligarchy during the century. On the other hand, it is possible to find examples of Genoese in the oligarchy who had completely ceased to participate in trade. Micer Solagrus Bocanegra, for example, was a regidor of Seville and also held high royal office being at different times, tesorero mayor /

¹ For the Spinola see Sancho, Los Genoveses, pp.11-12. Nobility was clearly implied by holding the post of regidor, founding a mayorazgo, and gaining an encomienda. For further examples see ibid and R.Pike, op.cit., pp.3-4.

mayor del rey, tesorero mayor de la camara, and tesorero mayor de la guerra.¹ He was only one member of a family other members of which were also to be found holding public office, money fiefs (tierra) and royal mercedes.²

7) Jews and Conversos

In this section an attempt will be made to focus on those aspects of Jewish and converso life which had far-reaching effects on the political and social disruptions of the kingdom during the fifteenth century. The aspects to be studied are the degree of social mobility achieved by conversos, and the degree to which Jews and conversos participated in royal and urban financial administration. It must be noted, however, that the stressing of these particular aspects tends to distort the general aspects of Jewish and converso problems and, consequently, some discussion of these general aspects is necessary in order to provide a relevant framework.

1) The growth of conversos in the towns

It has been calculated that at the expulsion there were some 30,000 Jewish families in Castile forming about 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ % /

1 See A.M.S., caja 1404-5, no.93, 28 Oct.1403; caja 1414-15, no.101; A.M.J., Actas Caps, year 1410, fols.73V-74V, 96V, 103V; B.N., MS., 13031, fol.41, 16 Feb.1407.

2 See, for example, A.M.S., caja 1400-1, nos.14, 15, 72, 74 which show that Luis Bocanegra was a regidor of Seville, held the office of mayordomo hidalgo, and received payments of tierra from the Crown.

1-1½% of the total population.¹ A careful use of tax assessments makes possible an analysis of the areas of settlement (Table XXVI).² The main qualification to the use of these assessments is that calculations based on them do not relate directly to the size of the Jewish aljamas but refer, instead, to the variable and connected factors of size and wealth. The number of Jewish settlements listed in these tax assessments is quite astonishing. Even on a large scale map it is impossible to make a full entry of all the relevant areas.

The main features of the pattern of Jewish settlements can be seen by comparing the data in Table XXVI with the corresponding map. There can be no doubt that the greatest density of population and wealth was in the northern areas of the kingdom. The Jewish tax assessors grouped the various Jewish communities into broad areas which more or less corresponded to diocesan boundaries.³ Bearing in mind the variation in the sizes of these areas, it is quite clear that the bishopric of Palencia was the most densely settled area. In 1464, for example, 14.03% of /

1 Y.Baer, A history of the Jews in Christian Spain (Philadelphia 1966), i.510-11, note 13 and ii.246. (Hereafter cited as Baer, History).

2 See Appendix BB below p.623 and map 6.

3 There were obvious exceptions. For example, the tax assessors included the archbishopric of Santiago within the area which they designated as the bishopric of León and Astorga.

of the total assessment for the whole kingdom corresponded to the bishopric of Palencia, compared to 13.46% for the huge archdiocese of Toledo and only 11.9% for the Extremadura and Andalusia regions which were easily eight times the size of the Palencia diocese. The areas of least wealth and numbers also emerge clearly. The Basque provinces hardly contained any Jewish population. Only Vitoria and Valmaseda had Jewish communities. There are signs of Jewish activity in Bilbao during the fifteenth century but there are no signs of a settlement there. The north western part of the kingdom also had a meagre Jewish population. León had never been an important Jewish centre and Compostela was not even listed in the tax assessments, although there is evidence that a few Jewish families appeared there in the fifteenth century.¹

Of greater importance, however, are the results which emerge from examining the proportional importance of the assessments for each individual Jewish aljama. There can be no doubt that the size and wealth of the Jewish communities in the most important towns of the kingdom had suffered a drastic decline by the fifteenth century. In the /

¹ See García de Cortazar, op.cit., p.298; A. Rodríguez Herrero, Valmaseda en el siglo xv (Bilbao, 1947), passim; Baer, History, i.191; documents cited in Appendix BB, p.623

the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the great centres of Castilian Jewry were to be found in the large towns - Seville, Toledo, Burgos, Segovia, and Valladolid.¹ The fifteenth century tax assessments clearly show a sharp decline in the importance of some of these areas. In 1464, for example, the assessment on the Jews living in Burgos only formed 0.11% of the total assessment for the kingdom. Palencia's assessment stood at 0.33%, Toledo at 0.79%, Seville 0.56%, and Córdoba at 0.22%. Only Segovia and Avila retained part of their former importance with assessments of 2.44% and 1.22% respectively. On the other hand, small towns and even villages obviously contained Jewish communities of substantial size and wealth - Herrera and Osorno at 1.07%, Mayorga 1.22%, Ponferrada 1.16%, Maqueda 1.11%, Guadalajara 1.79%, Béjar and Hervas 2.22%, Medellín 1.69%, Cáceres 1.27%, Segura de León 1.74%, and Jerez de los Caballeros at 2.07%.² As percentages, the variations between the large towns like Toledo and the small communities like Segura de León do not appear very significant. But it must be remembered that the Jews in Burgos and Toledo now formed a very small minority /

¹ Baer, *History*, i.192.

² These percentages are calculated from the detailed *repartimiento* for 1464 in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.13 (Antiguo leg.18^a), 6 folios.

minority in relation to the total urban population, whereas in the small towns the Jewish communities could form as much as a third or even a half of the total population.¹ Why had this change in demographic emphasis happened?

The main reason is to be found in the effects of successive waves of violent anti-Jewish movements which swept the large Castilian towns from the late fourteenth century onwards. These had the effect of either expelling Jewish families into the smaller towns and villages of the kingdom or making them turn to conversion.² The violent outbursts all over the kingdom in 1391 were in this respect a turning point - especially in the large towns. The demographic evidence which has been cited is, in fact, merely a confirmation of evidence to be gleaned from other documentation. In Seville, the synagogues were converted into churches and the Jewish quarter as such virtually disappeared.³ In Toledo and Burgos, the Jewish communities suffered catastrophically from the anti-Jewish outbursts /

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- 1 Most Jewish communities probably did not surpass fifty families. The evidence supports the assumption that Jews received better protection in the lordships of the Church and the nobility. In general the assessments, referred to in Appendix BB, show that Jewish communities were stronger in the lands of the nobility. See also Baer, *History*, i.199 and ii.246-7.
 - 2 F.Cantera, 'La judería de Calahorra', *Sef.*, xv(1955), 365-6, suggests that warfare may also have played an important role. Contemporaries, of course, were aware of the more startling demographic changes. See, for example, F.Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien: Urkunden und Regesten* (Berlin, 1936), ii.260. (Hereafter cited as Baer, *Die Juden*.)
 - 3 Baer, *History*, ii.96-7; Amador de los Ríos, *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos* (Madrid, 1960), pp.461, 477, 478; Baer, *Die Juden*, ii.234-5.

outbursts. Even in Segovia the Jewish population in 1460 was only half the size it had been in 1390.¹

The events of 1391 made their greatest impression on the large towns. In many cases, however, the drop in the Jewish population was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of conversos, whose numbers by the second half of the fifteenth century ran into tens of thousands. Thus, although the flourishing Jewish centre in Seville virtually disappeared in 1391, fiscal data from the beginning of the sixteenth century shows that Seville contained the largest community of conversos in the kingdom.²

It was in fact the large towns which on the whole provided the scene for the explosive events during the century. The anti-Jewish movements of 1391 had been motivated by hatred of Jewish worldly success as well as by religion. It will be seen in the following discussion that conversion, which seemed temporarily to solve the religious tension, only opened more opportunities to the converted Jew in terms of finance, tax administration, and office holding /

1 Baer, History, i.420, note 5, ii.97-8, 485, note 4; Baer, Die Juden, ii.272. Avila's Jewish population may have retained its strong position by escaping the excesses of 1391: P. León Tello, 'La judería de Avila', Sef. xxiii (1963), 37-8.

2 C. Guillén, 'Un padrón de conversos sevillanos', B. Hisp., lxxv (1963), 51; Baer, History, ii. 98, 246, 271.

holding. While the great numbers of Jews existing in the small townships and villages of the kingdom should not be totally disregarded, attention will be focussed on analysing those aspects of Jewish and converso life in the large towns which so often fused together into social and political explosions.

ii) The Jews and the law. Royal protection

The Jew did not belong to any one of the three estates of society as envisaged by the law. Instead, the Jew - whether he was rich or poor, rabbi or artisan - formed part of a community which was distinct from the rest of society. To a large extent the Jewish community or aljama in any particular city, town, or village was distinctive and separately located because the Jewish style of life required a considerable degree of communal organization in order to provide for synagogues, kosher food, and Jewish courts and education.¹

On the whole the laws of Castile did not attempt to govern the internal life and organization of the Jewish aljamas.² Instead the laws attempted to regulate the problematical /

1 H.Beinart, 'Hispano-Jewish society', J.W.H., xi(1968), 221,226-7.

2 See Baer, Die Juden, ii.249-51 for an example of royal intervention to protect Jewish autonomy against Christian encroachment.

problematical relationships between Christian and Jews by placing restrictions on the latter. These laws were frequently ignored, altered, and renewed, depending on the circumstances at any given period of time. The essential restrictions, however, remained in theory unaltered and enforceable. The main points in the laws drawn up in 1412 under the influence of Vincent Ferrer, for example, appeared in much the same form in the Sentencia of Medina del Campo in 1465.¹ The Jews were confined to separate quarters or districts in all towns and villages. The law required that at all times they should wear special signs of identification on their clothes and that their dress should be modest. Not only were Jews supposed to live in their own quarters but the laws attempted to prevent social intercourse as much as possible. The laws attempted to prevent Christians from working for Jews. Restrictions on the economic activities and careers open to Jews were carefully laid down by the laws. Jews were barred from careers in royal and urban government. They were not allowed by law to farm taxes. In theory they could not practice medicine and Christians /

1 The severe restrictions of 1412 were later relaxed. For the text of the laws and notes on them see Baer, Die Juden, ii.263-72. For a general discussion of the laws, Baer, History, ii.167-9; Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.533-7. Relevant sections of the sentencia of 1465 in C.D.R.A.H., 431-40 (cix, 1465).

Christians were forbidden to seek treatment from Jewish physicians. Inevitably, also, the laws dealt at length with the problems of usury and sexual relationships between Jews and Christians.

The Jewish communities in Castile were regarded as being under royal protection and there can be no doubt that, for most of the century, the monarchy attempted not only to afford this protection but also to relax the rigours of the legal restrictions on Jews as far as practical day to day matters were concerned.¹ The concern of the monarchy may have been partly prompted by a fear that persecution of Jews would lead to a decline in royal income and a lack of financial technocrats. Henry III, for example, levied stiff financial penalties on the towns, after the violent anti-Jewish movements of 1391, in order to make up for losses to royal revenues as well as to prevent further violence.² Yet many other measures seem to have been prompted by a real desire to promote harmony between the two communities. The co-operation between the influential Abraham Bienveniste, Alvaro de Luna, and /

1 See, for example, the brief but excellent study by J. Torres Fontes, Los Judíos murcianos (Murcia, 1965), *passim*.

2 The accounts of Seville, for example, contain much documentation down to the fiscal year 1410-11 concerning the fine of 135,500 doblas which Henry III imposed on the town as a penalty for the massacres of 1391. In the end a royal pardon was obtained through the offices of Nicolas Martínez, regidor and contador mayor de cuentas. See, for example, A.M.S., caja 1401-2, no.6; caja 1402-3, nos.2,3; caja 1403-4, no.5; caja 1404-5, nos.5,30,32,37,97; caja 1409-10, no.67; caja 1410-11, no.129.

and John II, for example, resulted in measures which, for a considerable period of time, seemed to promise a restoration of the Jewish communities to their former position before the violent destructions of 1391. Almost immediately after the end of John II's minority and Catherine of Lancaster's death, the royal council, in September 1418, suspended the severe laws of 1412 and in effect decided that only one of the restrictions on Jews should be observed in practice - namely the requirement that Jews should wear special signs of identification.¹ Then in 1432 Abraham Bienveniste, as court rabbi² and with the support of the monarchy, attempted to link the Jewish aljamas into one organization for the whole kingdom. A meeting of the representatives of the Jewish communities met in Valladolid and drew up statutes dealing with the internal life of the aljamas of Castile. Civil and criminal cases involving Jews, for example, were not only to be tried under Jewish law and in local, autonomous courts, but appeals were to lie to Abraham Bienveniste and any judges he might appoint. This protection and encouragement on the part of the monarchy helped to mitigate the /

1 Torres Fontes, Los Judíos murcianos, pp.7,28-9. In 1437 John II reaffirmed the decisions of 1418 and in 1443 he vitiated a papal attempt to reintroduce the full force of the laws of 1412. Baer, Die Juden, ii. 302-3; Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.578-9, 992-5.

2 On the court rabbi see below pp.446-7.

the worst effects of the persecutions of 1391.¹ It is also clear that for considerable periods of time conditions at the local level also reflected a spirit of toleration. The Jewish aljama did tend to be a separate quarter within the town, yet this did not prevent some Jews living in other districts of the town or Christians from living within the Jewish quarters.² Outside the towns the differences between Jews and Christians were even less marked. Shortly after the waves of urban anti-semitism in 1391, for example, documents from the lands of the monastery of San Salvador de Oña applied the courtesy title of 'don' to Jews and described them as escuderos, thus in practice assigning them a status equivalent to that section of Christian society which was clearly a cut above the majority of the third estate.³ Yet, despite the fact that Henry IV attempted to continue a policy of protection and toleration, the great increase in popular anti-semitic persecution during the second half of the fifteenth century nullified the benefits to be derived from the monarchy's policies.⁴

iii) /

1 For a detailed discussion see Baer, History, ii.259-70.

2 Baer, Die Juden, ii.303.

3 A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp.317, docs.15 and 17, 6 April 1392,

4 See below pp.457-67, 503-5 and 1 May 1392.

iii) Occupations of the Jews. The Jews and finance

The majority of Jews in the towns were artisans, shopkeepers, or small scale merchants.¹ Many Jews in the big towns like Toledo and Jerez also worked lands on the outskirts of the town. In some areas of the countryside and in some of the smaller towns, the Jews worked and owned a considerable number of vineyards and arable and pasture lands. In Hita and Buitrago, for example, there were some fifty or sixty Jewish house and landowners at the time of the expulsion. In Haro, in 1453, the Jews had apparently established themselves so well as landowners that they not only leased lands to Christian or Moslem tenants but also aroused the jealousy of the Christian authorities who decided to forbid further sales of lands to Jews or Moslems.²

No Jews gained offices in the urban oligarchies of fifteenth century Castile and hardly any gained royal offices. Yet, despite legal limitations on their activities, some Jews gained positions of great influence in society because of their learning and skills. The expertise which Jews displayed in medicine, for example, resulted in their being granted an almost official status as /

1 See in general Baer, History, i.197-8, ii.247; Beinart, ubi supra, pp.224-5; Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., p.478; Baer, Die Juden, ii.247-8, 304.

2 Baer, History, i.197, 200-1, ii.247; Sancho, Historia, iii.58-9; Baer, Die Juden, ii.247-8, 256, 278-9, 325-7.

as surgeons and physicians, despite the more stringent laws which prohibited Jews from practicing medicine among the Christians. Many towns, such as Burgos and Villalón, retained the services of Jewish physicians who were paid an annual salary by the town council.¹ Indeed, the council of a large town like Murcia not only paid salaries to such physicians but also granted medical licences to Jewish candidates who applied for and successfully passed a 'public' examination.² Not surprisingly the nobility and monarchy also made use of the services of Jewish physicians. The archbishop of Toledo, Pedro Tenorio, entrusted his health to Jewish physicians as did at various times the duke of Arjona, the Countess doña Juana Pimentel, the marquis of Santillana, the duke of Cuéllar, and the count of Alba.³ All the kings of Castile during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had their own personal Jewish physicians, from Abraham Aben Zarsal in John I's reign down to Rabbi Yuce Aben Santo and his son, Rabbi Abraham Lubel, in Henry IV's reign.⁴

It /

1 Santera, Alvar García, pp.37-9; R.C.V., Actas de Villalón, B, fols.16R-22V.

2 Torres Fontes, Los Judíos murcianos, pp.19-21, 32-3.

3 These examples from Baer, Die Juden, ii.242-3, 251, 309, 325, 329; Baer, History, ii.118; Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.457-8.

4 See examples in Baer, Die Juden, ii.309, 321-2; Baer, History, ii.118, 250; Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.458, 495. Not all the royal physicians were, of course, Jews. A good many, some of them conversos, are listed in A.G.S., Q.de C., leg.1, nos.12, 80, 93, 270, 306, 328, 333, 338, 340, 367.

It was in finance, however, that the Jews made their real mark in society. Viewed from the local or regional level it is clear that the Jewish financiers involved themselves in all the fiscal ramifications of the urban, seigneurial, and royal financial administrations. In Seville, during the late fourteenth century, Jews were prominent in the farming of the urban revenues and in Jerez, in the late fifteenth century, the town council even attempted to protect the Jewish tax farmers from the Inquisition.¹ In Murcia, Jews were prominent amongst those tax collectors appointed by the town council to take charge of royal revenues within the town until royal tax farms had been properly established.² The nobility also found the Jews useful as tax farmers and collectors. In 1433, for example, the tax collector of the lands of the Medinaceli region was don Samuel Abenxuxen and, over fifty years later, the same area was being farmed out by the duke of Medinaceli to Rabiza Carrillo of Almazán and Rabbi Mosen Aben Simon of Siguenza.³ Similarly it was a Jew, Mosseh Garfati, who was the chief financial official of the duke of Béjar during the period 1455-1462 and Jews were prominent in farming the alcabalas and /

1 Baer, Die Juden, ii.235-6; Sancho, Historia, i.44-5.

2 Torres Fontes, Los Judíos murcianos, pp.16-17, gives data for 1427-9, 1437-9, and 1443-52.

3 A.D.M., Med., leg.40, doc.57, accounts of 1433 and ibid, leg.50, doc.7, farm conditions for 1489.

and other taxes of the town of Plasencia which lay in the duke's lordship.¹

A useful and general view of the activities of the Jewish financiers and tax farmers is provided by surviving registers of royal revenues. The register for 1440, for example, gives data on the royal taxes, the tax farmers, the tax collectors, and the guarantors who supported the successful bids for the tax farms. This evidence makes it possible to make a complete list of the Jews involved in the royal finances in this particular year.² The list contains the names of families which, without exaggeration, may be described as dynasties of tax farmers and collectors - the Abenamías, Abenxuxen, Abudaran, Baquex, Bienveniste, Çabaco, Levi, Leyva, and Nasçi. The Levis, for example, are to be found involved in the royal finances from don Yuçaf el Levi, tax farmer of the albaquías in Henry III's reign, down to Yuçaf Levi, tax collector in the bishopric of Osma in 1470.³ By at least 1429 the Çabacos of Herrera became involved with the royal finances and, in 1447-8, Salamon Çabaco was still acting as a guarantor for other tax farmers.⁴ Indeed it /

1 Baer, Die Juden, ii.323-4 and Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., p.625, note 1, where other examples are given.

2 See Appendix CC below pp.624-38.

3 The examples cited in A.M.J., caja 12, no.2, de orden 33, 1403 and A.G.S., Exp.Hac., leg.1, no.195, 1470.

4 These examples in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fols.196R-214V and fols.329R-330R.

it is tempting to argue, on the evidence of the royal financial accounts, that there was an oligarchy of extended families of Jewish farmers and financiers. Such an argument is convincing when, for example, the various family relationships of the Bienveniste emerge from the documentation.¹ In other cases, however, some of the surnames, such as Cohen, were so common that it is impossible to assume that ties of kinship operated to any significant degree. Moreover there were particular individuals, like don Abraham Seneor and Rabbi Yuçe Aben Santo, who did not spring from families with an apparent tax farming tradition and yet played an extremely important role in royal finances. The involvement of particular families in the royal finances could also be of short duration or could vary in intensity. The register of 1440, therefore, does not contain the names of such individuals or of other important Jewish families. The Aben Arroyos, for example, although not mentioned in the register of 1440, were at various times involved in the royal finances from the reign of Henry III right through to the reign of Henry IV.² The members of the Timón family /

1 The documentation on the guarantors of the tax farms usually gives the family ties, if any, between Jews with the same surname. Cantera, Alvar García, p.54, note 48, argues that the Bienveniste were also related to the Levi of Burgos. A detailed study of these connections would throw much light on the Jewish financiers.

2 See, for example, A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fol.76 for Çuleman Aben Arroyo, tax collector in Galicia for Henry III and ibid, leg.11, fols.6V, 105R-107R, for Symuel Aben Arroyo and his son, Yuçuf, tax farmers of the alcabalas of Allendebro and Guipúzcoa for Henry IV.

family, on the other hand, only seem to have intervened in the royal finances during the 1450s.¹

How important were the Jews to the royal finances? In Baer's view the Jews controlled 'about two-thirds of the indirect taxes and customs within the country, on the frontier and at the ports'. Moreover a 'network of Jewish tax-farmers and collectors was spread over the entire kingdom' and there was 'a Jewish tax-farmer general', don Abraham Bienveniste, who also held the post of king's treasurer.² Certain aspects of Baer's view need to be modified. The importance of don Abraham Bienveniste's position in the royal financial administration has been exaggerated. It is certainly true that he was one of the two tax farmers general of the alcabalas and tercias in 1440. Tax farmers, however, competed for the tax farms and it would be wrong to assume that Jewish tax farmers always succeeded in gaining control of the general or global farms.³ Moreover, these general or global farms were, according to the administrative practice of the period, sub-farmed into smaller units which were acquired by Christians as well as Jews. These points also throw doubt on the view that the Jews controlled two thirds /

1 For their activities as tax farmers during the years 1447-58 see A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fol.319R; ibid leg.7, no.5, fol.2R; ibid, leg.6, no.8, fols.5V-6V.

2 Baer, History, II, 250-1.

3 Abraham Bienveniste's exceptional position in 1440 may be gauged by comparing it with other periods in which he was a tax farmer general. In 1431, for example, he was only one of fourteen tax farmers general of the global farm of the alcabalas and tercias and in 1434 only one of seven in a similar global farm. A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fol.262R, 265R.

thirds of the taxes mentioned, since the evidence for this view is too limited in time to make the generalization valid for the period as a whole. In fact, the evidence still has to be subjected to a statistical survey.¹

Finally the statement that Abraham Bienveniste was John II's treasurer is misleading. The documents show that Abraham Bienveniste was, for a time, the treasurer of the albaquías. This was a minor post and cannot be equated to that of the royal treasurer or extended to apply to the whole of John II's reign.² There is, in short, a tendency to exaggerate the success of the Jews. In fact the financial acumen of the Jews has to be balanced by their relative failure to win acceptance into the worlds of the urban oligarchies and the royal court.

The vast majority of the Jewish financiers and tax farmers lived in the towns. In this sense the evidence certainly supports Baer's emphasis on the network of Jewish tax farmers and collectors which spread over the kingdom. Indeed, the very number of these men may well explain the lack of a Jewish merchant class of the same calibre as the Burgos or Genoese merchants. Rarely do the /

1 Baer based his view mainly on the evidence of the 1439 register. My impression of the registers of 1439 and 1440 is that the Jews may have controlled just under half the tax farms. In general the documentation suggests that the late 1420s and the late 1430s were particularly successful periods for the Jewish tax farmers - an impression which coincides with political events.

2 There were many tesoreros in the financial administration none of whom were regarded as being as important as the chief officials of the contadurías.

the documents provide evidence of Jewish merchants who rose above the level of the urban retailer.¹ On this point, indeed, the evidence given to royal financial officials as to the general reliability of the guarantors and tax farmers was surprisingly meagre. In March 1463, for example, a witness gave evidence about three guarantors one of whom was don Yuçuf Creçiente, inhabitant of Aguilar. Apart from stating that don Yuçuf made his living by farming revenues, the witness merely added that

he has some large houses of residence in Aguilar and two other pairs of houses which provide him with income, all these houses being worth more than 70,000 ms.²

The meagre information provided by such evidence may reflect the fact that the Jewish financiers did not diversify their activities or that royal officials were willing to accept a minimum of evidence for financiers whose expertise was in itself a substantial guarantee. It seems more probable, however, that the role of the Jews as money changers, money lenders, and tax farmers necessitated the accumulation of liquid capital and that this tendency was reinforced by the desire to possess wealth in a form which could be easily hidden or transported during periods /

1 A fact which is reflected in the almost complete absence of a discussion on this subject in the otherwise detailed works of Amador de los Ríos, Baer, and Cantera.
 2 A.G.S., Exp.Hac., leg.2, no.188, evidence presented to the contadores mayores, 29 March 1463.

periods of persecution.¹ Within the towns, the Jewish financiers were indispensable to the efficient running of urban and royal finances. Town councils, indeed, had cause to be grateful for the loans which Jews provided at times when hard cash was desperately needed.² Yet there are no examples of Jews gaining access to urban offices or to the urban oligarchies. Indeed, because of his identification with loans and taxes, the Jewish financier lived within a society many of whose members hated him.

There were several factors which helped the richest Jewish financiers to gain access to court circles. The very extent to which the Jews farmed the royal revenues made the richer tax farmers acceptable at the royal court. Moreover these individuals displayed remarkable administrative talents and the monarchy relied on them to a surprising extent. In 1429 and 1430, for example, the naval and military supplies and payments necessary for the Castilian resistance of an invasion from Aragon were organized largely by Jewish financiers, such as don Yuçaf el Nasçi and don Abraham Bienveniste, who were outstanding for their administrative ability.³ The fact was that these /

1 Sancho, *Historia*, iii.61-2; Torres Fontes, *Los Judíos murcianos*, p.18.

2 The Jews of Murcia, for example, made loans of 10,000 mrs three times to the town during the period 1445-53 and, in 1482, the Jews of Villalón lent the town 20,000 mrs. Torres Fontes, *Los Judíos murcianos*, pp.18-19; R.C.V., *Actas de Villalón*, B.fols.26R,32V.

3 The accounts for these operations in A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fols.103R-106R, 196R-214V.

these Jews could link financial techniques and capital to a thorough grasp of the workings of the royal finances. They could not only use bills of exchange like the Genoese merchant but could also appreciate the weaknesses of the royal administration and suggest remarkable reforms.¹

The Jewish financier could advance money and recoup by farming the royal revenues. In 1429, for example, don Abraham Bienveniste lent John II 150,000 ms which were urgently needed to pay the troops stationed on the Aragonese frontier.² Similarly, in 1466, don Abraham Seneor advanced badly needed cash to Henry IV and recouped his loan from the farm of the servicio and montazgo revenues.³

In a very real sense the learned and rich Jews who gained access to the royal court were regarded by both the Jews and the Christians as being the representatives of the Jewish communities. In many ways the internal life of the aljamas was autonomous, but it was obviously in the interest of the monarchy to ensure that the Jewish leaders were subject to royal influence. For this reason the Castilian monarchy appointed a court rabbi who acted as a judge in appeals involving Jews and as a spokesman and /

1 See, for example, the recorded bills of exchange in A.G.S., Exp. Hac., leg. 2, no. 96 and the far reaching reforms of the financial administration proposed by Profet el Nasqi to the royal council in B.N., MS., 19698⁴⁴.

2 A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 1, fol. 105V.

3 Ibid, leg. 11, fols. 457R-458R, 747R-748V.

and leader for the Jewish communities. The court rabbi was not necessarily an ordained rabbi, but he was a public figure of great wealth or learning who enjoyed the trust of the king. He was also important from the fiscal point of view in that it was he who apportioned the annual tax burden which the Jewish communities had to pay to the king. The monarchy, therefore, not only encouraged the centralisation of the life of Castilian Jewry under royal influence, but also ensured that the Jewish leaders would themselves see to the administration and collection of the royal taxes on Jews. The individuals who held the post of court rabbi were men who represented the two traditions of learning and finance. Don Mayr Alguadex, court rabbi in Henry III's reign, and Maestre Shemaya, court rabbi in Henry IV's reign, were both royal physicians. Don Abraham Bienveniste, court rabbi in John II's reign, and don Abraham Seneor, court rabbi towards the end of Henry IV's reign, were both men who were outstanding as financiers and tax farmers.¹ Even when the post of court rabbi lapsed for a short time after don /

¹ See Baer, *History*, ii.259-70, 314-6. For examples of Abraham Seneor's involvement in the most diverse tax farms during the period 1466-74 see A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 11, fols.7V, 457R-458V and Exp.Hac., leg.1, no.213.

don Abraham Bienveniste's death in 1450, the committee of five Jews which apportioned the taxation among the Jewish communities reflected the same unique blend of learning, financial skill, and royal favour. In effect the committee was made up of Rabbi Yuçuf Aben Santo, philosopher and physician to the king, Yuçuf Bienveniste, son of don Abraham, and three other distinguished financiers and tax farmers, Çag Çapanton, Frayme Abenzuxen, and Maestre Timón.¹

iv) Conversion

Some Jews became Christians because of a genuine religious conversion. The conversion of Solomon Halevi of Burgos and his family serves as an example, for the members of this family, under their Christian name of Santa María, were to produce outstanding churchmen of great learning and religious conviction.² Many Jews, however, became Christians under duress. Fear of persecution led to a tide of conversions in which religious conviction hardly played a part. After the violent outbursts against Jews in 1391, the large towns of Castile witnessed /

1 For the repartimiento of 1450 see ibid, E.M.R., leg.1, fols.319R-320V. Baer, Die Juden, ii.320, note 1, concludes that Rabbi Yuçuf Aben Santo was none other than the philosopher Joseph Ibn Shemtob.

2 Cantera Burgos, op.cit., passim; Baer, History, ii. 139-41.

witnessed a decline in the numbers of the Jewish population and a sharp rise in the numbers of the conversos.

A desire to escape persecution, however, was not the only motive behind the large number of conversions. Legally the Jew was barred from almost all offices and professions in Church and state. The same was not true for the converso. The impediments and limitations imposed on the Jew by law were based on religious and not racial grounds. Hence, as John II's secretary pointed out, all honours and dignities were open to the converso

since sacred baptism and its efficacy makes the baptized a new man, cleanses him, cancels any obligation of atonement, and eliminates blame and sin ... To maintain the contrary would be obvious heresy ...'

John II's secretary, Fernán Díaz de Toledo, himself a converso, was only expressing the view that was contained in the laws. Conversion to Christianity opened the doors to public office. Many Jews availed themselves of the opportunities provided by conversion while retaining their beliefs in their former faith.

Inevitably the religious sincerity of the conversos came to be doubted.² Words ascribed to Pedro de la Cavallería illuminate the suspicions and motives that surrounded /

1 See the Instrucción del Relator printed by P. Manuel Alonso in his edition of the Defensorium Unitatis Christianae, p.345.

2 Baer, History, ii.155,274-5.

surrounded the conversions of Jews to Christianity:-

Could I, as a Jew, ever have risen higher than a rabbinical post? But now, see, I am one of the chief councillors (jurado) of the city. For the sake of the little man who was hanged (Jesus), I am accorded every honor, and I issue orders and decrees to the whole city of Saragossa. Who hinders me - if I choose - from fasting on Yom Kippur and keeping your festivals and all the rest? ¹

v) The success of the conversos: the converso in urban government, royal government, and the Church

The conversos were remarkably successful in carving out careers for themselves in spheres prohibited to Jews. The extent of converso success is hard to measure precisely because conversion and success tended to obscure Jewish origins. Yet, even if the discussion is restricted to definite examples, a convincing picture emerges of converso entry into key public offices.

The success of the conversos in gaining entry into the urban oligarchies was so marked that contemporaries were inclined to believe in widespread corruption and deliberate and concerted conspiracies.² The examples of the /

¹ Cited, ibid, ii.276-7.

² See the excellent article by F. Márquez Villanueva, 'Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo xv', R.A.B.M., lxi(1957), 503-40.

the converso families of the Marmolejos and the Martínez, who gained access to the patrician oligarchy in Seville, have already been considered in detail.¹ These were not exceptional cases. In Seville there were at least a good half dozen converso families in the patriciate - the Roelas, Cerón, Las Casas, Ortíz, and Vázquez de Moscoso, as well as the Marmolejos and Martínez.² The same pattern of converso infiltration and - in some cases - predominance, applied to other major towns of the kingdom. Burgos was controlled by a converso family network which included the Santa María, the Maluendas, and the Cartagenas.³ For a long period of time, Segovia was controlled by the converso family of the Arias whose success was largely due to the influence of Diego Arias de Avila, Henry IV's contador mayor, secretary, and favourite. Subsequently, when the political fortunes of the Arias declined, Segovia passed into the control of the converso mayordomo, Andrés de Cabrera, and his converso allies.⁴ In Toledo and Córdoba the conversos were so successful that their expulsion from office became one of the chief aims of revolutionary movements within the towns. In Córdoba /

1 See above pp. 370-2.

2 Other converso families on the edges of the oligarchy were Baez, Susán, Alemán, Bernal, Franco, Sisbón.

3 Márquez, ubi supra, p. 510.

4 Ibid, pp. 519-20.

Córdoba they were credited with having all public offices at their disposal.¹ In Toledo, in 1449, Pedro Sarmiento specifically named all the converso officeholders who were to be expelled from office.² In 1467, however, the conversos again counted powerful officeholders in their ranks when trouble once more reached the point of explosion.³ Not until the Inquisition began a systematic purge of urban oligarchies did the conversos fall from power in the Castilian towns.

It has already been noted that many regidores were involved in the farms of the royal revenues.⁴ Not surprisingly many of such regidores were conversos. Yet the conversos played a much more significant role in the royal financial administration by gaining offices at court. If the Jew could not apply his financial skills directly at court the converso could, and the period saw the conversos firmly entrenched in chief financial offices. From Juan Sánchez de Sevilla in Henry III's reign down to Diego Arias de Avila in Henry IV's reign, conversos are to be found holding office as contadores mayores.⁵ The contadores /

1 Ibid, p.518.

2 See the list of fourteen converso officeholders in Sarmiento's Sentencia printed in Defensorium Unitatis Christianae, ed. Manuel Alonso, p.363.

3 Baer, History, ii.303-4.

4 See the disastrous effects on the municipal finances of Seville caused by the first attack by the Inquisition on conversos in J.de Mata Carriazo, 'La Inquisición y las rentas de Sevilla', in Homenaje a Don Ramón Carande, ii.95-112; see also above pp.369-77.

5 For data on two other converso contadores mayores - Diego González de Toledo and Fernán López de Saldaña - see below pp.458-62, 526. In general see C. Espejo, 'El leonés Fernán Alón de Robres', B.S.E.C., iii (1978), 170-5, 177-84; Baer, History, ii.282-3.

contadores mayores were the most important financial officials and they wielded considerable administrative and political power. Yet the royal secretaries were more powerful and here too the conversos were remarkably successful. Conversos such as Fernán Díaz de Toledo, Juan González Pintado, Alvar Gómez, Diego Romero and Diego Arias de Avila were, as secretaries, the most important civil servants in the royal bureaucracy. Often their importance was such that they held various offices as well as being the close confidants of the king. Both Fernán Díaz de Toledo and Diego Arias de Avila, for example, were members of the royal council and held important offices in the judiciary and in financial administration.¹

Some conversos made brilliant careers for themselves in the Church. The converso families who controlled the town of Burgos, for example, also produced bishops and administrators of the calibre of Pablo de Santa María, bishop of Burgos, Alfonso de Cartagena, bishop of Burgos, Juan Ortega de Maluenda, bishop of Coria, and Gonzalo García de Santa María, bishop of Plasencia. Diego Arias de Avila's son, Juan Arias, was made bishop of Segovia and thus /

¹ A detailed study of the careers of these secretaries would show that they wielded power and influence to an extent usually ascribed only to sixteenth century secretaries.

thus confirmed his family's control in Segovia and his father's influence at court.¹ At a lower level the influence of the conversos was just as pronounced. Unlike Diego Arias de Avila, Fernán Díaz de Toledo did not have a bishop in his family. Yet, when he wrote his Instrucción in defence of the conversos, he could address it to his friend, the bishop of Cuenca, and he could end his missive by offering the services of his cousin, the archdeacon of Niebla.²

It is clear that many conversos were conspicuously successful in their chosen careers. More important, however, was the degree of assimilation into Christian society which made it difficult to determine who was descended from Jewish or converso families. It was this successful assimilation of the converso that Fernán Díaz de Toledo presented so cogently in his Instrucción:-

For who knows who are descended from them [the Jews and conversos]? In our own times there was the reverend father don Pablo, bishop of Burgos, of beloved memory, the king's chief chancellor and a member of his council. His grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, and other descendants are to be found today in the lineages of the Manriques, Mendozas, Rojas, Saravias, Pestines, Luxanes, Solis, Mirandas, Osorios, Salcedos, and other lineages and families. Indeed some of these descendants are /

1 For these and other examples see Tarsicio, Elección, p.218; Claros Varones, pp.125-33; García Sánchez, pp.43-4.

2 Instrucción del Relator, ubi supra, p.356.

are great grandchildren of Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, the king's mayordomo mayor, and of the marshal, Diego Fernández de Córdoba, nephew of the greatest in the kingdom. Similarly there is the example of Juan Sánchez de Sevilla who was of this race (i.e. a converso) and was the king's contador mayor. Today his grandsons and great grandsons belong to the Aravjo, Porras, Valdés, Anaya, Ocampo, Monroy, Solis de Sosa, Villaquirán, Bobadilla, and other lineages. Nor will it be any easier to trace such distinctions among those who will be alive a hundred years from now. Does Juan Manuel de Lando worry because he is the grandson of Francisco Fernández Marmolejo who was a converso and contador mayor of the king and whose descendants today provide many of the regidores and caballeros and officials of the town of Seville? The same applies to the grandsons and great grandchildren of Diego Sánchez de Valladolid, the king's contador mayor de cuentas; some of them belong to the Santisteban, Motiçón, Bernaldez, and other lineages and families. Similarly the grandchildren of my cousin and lord, Alfonso Alvares, belong to the Sandoval, Carrillos, Cervantes, Alarcón, Viello, and other lineages and families. Moreover what about the grandchildren of Doctor Franco? Some of them are in the Avellaneda family and others belong to the Cuéllar and Peñaloza. Some of my grandchildren belong to the Barrionuevo, Sotomayor, and Mendoza, and are descended from Juan Hurtado de Mendoza the elder, the king's mayordomo mayor, who was their great great grandfather. I could fill up many pages with more examples...

8) The Change of Atmosphere: Intolerance and Racialism.

The picture presented by Fernán Díaz de Toledo is one of such a degree of converso assimilation that almost all /

1 Ibid, pp. 352-3.

all the nobility had converso relatives and ancestors.¹ Two problems seem to arise from such a picture of swift and sure assimilation. In the first place how was this assimilation effected and, secondly, was the assimilation as successful as John II's secretary suggests?

An answer to these questions may be obtained by looking at a detailed example such as that of the converso, Diego González de Toledo, contador mayor de cuentas to John II. This was the man whom Fernán Díaz de Toledo calls Doctor Franco and whose descendants, according to the royal secretary, belonged to the 'Avellaneda family and others belong to the Cuéllar and Peñaloza'.² The example of Diego González and his family reveals that Fernán Díaz de Toledo's arguments are accurate but that they represent something considerably less than a complete picture. In fact, as far as social status is concerned, an examination of the evidence concerning this family produces the impression of a social kaleidoscope in which the indications of status change constantly.

In the first place it is clear that the family retained some of the characteristics of the Jewish tax farmer. Diego González de Toledo was never himself a tax /

1 He does, in fact, go on to prove this point at considerable length.

2 See the passage just quoted.

tax farmer but his brother, Pero Franco, remained an important tax farmer down to 1437.¹ It is true that Pero Franco, with Alvaro de Luna's favour, became treasurer of the royal mint at Toledo.² Yet the background of tax farming remained - and tax farming was incompatible with nobility and also, perhaps, served as a reminder of a Jewish background.

On the whole, however, Diego González de Toledo himself emerges as a royal bureaucrat of the first calibre. He was one of Alvaro de Luna's men, rose to the top of the civil service after a purge in 1429 in which he played an active part, and was an extremely able administrator.³ He was, for example, one of the few officials who were responsible for an important reform of the contaduría mayor de cuentas, was a member of the king's council, an oidor, and was entrusted at various times with diplomatic negotiations.⁴ He was, in short, absolutely at home in the world of the upper bureaucracy. When, for example, he emancipated his two sons from paternal control /

1 In 1431 he was one of the tax farmers of the global farm of the alcabalas and tercias, in 1435 of the monedas, and in 1434-7 of the alcabalas and tercias: A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fols.241V, 262R, 265R.

2 He is referred to as tesorero as early as 1429: ibid, fol.101R. The Ref.Halconero, p.167 attributes the appointment to Luna.

3 See ibid, p.96.

4 For the reforms of the contaduría see B.N., MS, 13259, fols.365V-369V, 2 July 1437; for examples of his work in the royal council, A.G.S., E.M.R., leg.1, fol.265R and leg.2, no.17, fol.3R; for examples of his diplomatic work, Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.107, 126 and Suárez Fernández, Relaciones entre Portugal y Castilla (Madrid, 1960), pp.187, 205.

control, he did so in the presence of his friends who, as oidores of the audiencia, were the chief judges of the kingdom. Not surprisingly one of his daughters, María de Toledo, was married off to Juan Velásquez de Cuéllar, oidor of the audiencia and alcalde mayor of the princess.¹ The Cuéllar family, to whom Fernán Díaz de Toledo refers, may subsequently have acquired noble status but this marriage was clearly an alliance between two civil service families.

Diego González de Toledo, however, was successful in acquiring some of the characteristics of nobility for his family. Faithful service to the Crown was rewarded by a royal licence granting Diego González the rather aristocratic privilege of founding mayorazgos.² Moreover, when the contador mayor de cuentas did proceed to found mayorazgos for his sons, it is clear that he disposed of considerable landed wealth - sufficient in any case to bestow lordships on his sons.³ A family with land, mayorazgos and lordships was respectable enough to marry into genuine nobility. In fact, at the time when Diego González founded his mayorazgos, one of his daughters, Teresa, was already married to the nobleman, Diego de Avellaneda.⁴ /

1 Data on the emancipation of his sons in 1441 and 1442 and on his daughter's marriage are contained in a document of thirty folios which also records the foundation of mayorazgos: A.G.S., D. de C., leg. 38, doc. 16.

2 Ibid. The licence was granted on the 2 June 1441.

3 Ibid. The mayorazgos were settled in Toledo on 28 Feb. 1443. Though the younger son received lordships, the document makes it clear that his inheritance would be primarily urban property in Toledo.

4 Ibid. She was to receive 3,500 gold florins and 275,000 mrs.

Avellaneda. The latter, though not a member of the great nobility, was one of the young nobles in the household of Alvaro de Luna.¹ When Luna became master of Santiago, Avellaneda was given one of the encomiendas of the order. Both the contador mayor de cuentas and the comendador of Santiago were, therefore, the clients of Alvaro de Luna and the marriage was one based on common interests and attitudes. Yet, from another point of view, the marriage was between the daughter of a converso and a Christian knight who was a persona de buen linaje.²

The successful career of the father and the advantageous marriages of the children may have done much to obscure the Jewish origins of the contador mayor's family. Years later, however, the converso and urban aspects of the family background were to reassert themselves with a vengeance. In 1443 Diego González founded mayorazgos for his sons and, as has been seen, these mayorazgos included lordships. Also included, however, were the town houses belonging to the family - casas mayores in the Santa María and Santo Tomé districts of Toledo and in the San Salvador district of Valladolid.³ Not surprisingly /

1 See, for example, Ref.Halc., pp.65-6.

2 Cron.Luna, p.410: 'El qual, por cierto, era un noble caballero de la Orden de Santiago, e tenía una buena encomienda que el Maestre su señor le avía dado, e era persona de buen linaje'.

3 A.G.S., D.de C., leg.38, doc.16.

surprisingly, therefore, the younger son - el licenciado Alfonso Franco - became a regidor of Toledo. Here, then, was another successful case of a converso entering the ranks of the oligarchy. This success, however, was paid for dearly. In 1467 Alfonso Franco, licenciado and regidor, joined his fellow conversos in the street fighting which took place in Toledo. He was captured. The count of Cifuentes and the alcalde mayor of Toledo, Pero López de Ayala, tried to protect him, even if only by putting him in prison. The mobs, however, demanded his person, dragged him out of prison and butchered him.¹ He was killed because he was identified as a converso and, more especially, as a successful converso.

The death of Alfonso Franco at the hands of the Toledo mob is a reminder that Fernán Díaz de Toledo's view of the assimilation of the conversos was too optimistic. The impediments and limitations imposed on the Jew by law may have been based purely on religious grounds. Legally conversion may have removed all these limitations. In fact, the hatred of the conversos and their success grew into racial hatred. As early as 1449 the idea was being /

¹ On these events see Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp. 96-100 and C.D.R.A.H., 545-51 (cxlv, 17 Aug. 1467). The mobs had already butchered the brothers La Torre, converso regidores.

being propagated that the pure blood of the old Castilian Christians was being defiled by those of the Jewish race.¹ This anti-semitic propaganda did not fail to receive an enthusiastic reception among the urban populations of Castile for reasons which will be examined later.² For the moment it is enough to note the hatred of the converso and his success. The following satire, written at the time of Pero Sarmiento's revolution in Toledo, depicts a society in which the hated converso has become so successful that Christians petition John II in order to be made conversos:-

King John by the grace of God ... Because you, John, told us and complained bitterly that you were born into the race of the stale and rancid - that is to say, the old and genteel Christians; moreover because you were born an old Christian and have not been able to prosper or practise artful, subtle, swindling and wicked tricks ... such as are practised by those who are legitimately of the Hebrew race - that is to say, marranos³ who have multiplied because of our sins: for these reasons you have asked and petitioned us to use our clemency and pity and order that you be legitimized and given permission to be a marrano so that you can use the tricks, arts, deceits, and frauds which the marranos use ... We understand that this petition is just since, otherwise, you would not be able to live among them without being continually cheated by them. Moreover other subjects of our /

1 See the quotation which follows.

2 See below ¶ 497-507

3 This ugly term may, perhaps, be best translated as 'Jewish swine'.

our kingdoms have petitioned us and requested this same favour. Therefore we agree and condescend to grant your petition and request. Accordingly by this present letter ... we legitimize you and hold you to be legitimized so that, from now on and for all your life, you will be a marrango and in your works and activities you will appear to have been born to the marranos and brought up by them. We give you licence and authority and empower you ... to use any subtleties, tricks, fawning devices, swindles and other similar arts of the kind that all those of the marrango race practise ... Moreover, if in the future you should live with some lord or lords, we authorize you to cheat them fearlessly and shamelessly and lead them to understand that money is worth a lot so that they become avaricious and are thrown into confusion and the workers and those who manage to make a meagre living will be lost and will not earn their subsistence.¹ Furthermore these lords will pay no heed - because of their avarice - to legal sanctions or to the advice which a former king gave to his sons. This king advised his sons to remember that they should never make any of the pharisees treasurers of their treasures, mayordomos of their finances, or councillors of their councils. The reason for this was that those of the Hebrew race, marranos, pharisees, and sadducees, were and are people who beguiled their masters with unnatural and pernicious desires. Moreover they were and are people who helped themselves from the wealth of their lords to whatever was necessary for their malpractices and arts. All these things would be the cause of making noble lords fall into the disgrace of poverty and into the hatred of their peoples. It would not be strange that those of this race should do these and other similar things since they arranged the death of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, their true creator - and this without any reason and despite the many /

1 The economic ruin of the nobility and people was increasingly blamed on Jews and conversos. For a discussion of the importance of the economic background see below

pp. 493-7, 544-7.

many blessings and privileges which he had bestowed on them ... Furthermore it is our pleasure and wish that from now on the device of your arms shall be an altar to Santa Maria and the fleur-de-lis. We also authorize you to practise usury and lend money at interest without any fear of legal sanctions. We authorize you to prepare the house of the Torah, worship images, marry your relatives, and hold the opinions and malicious intentions which are held by the marranos. For they do not believe in what Holy Mother Church believes and preaches. They do not believe the contents of the credo which we sing and which is truly our faith. Instead the said marranos hold and affirm - against the truth - that there is no after-life but only birth and death.¹ We also authorize you to keep the Sabbath and work on Sunday and on the other feast days which the Church orders to be observed. You can keep the Saturday Sabbaths to such an extent that you cannot be obliged to do any work on any of them. The night before the Sabbath you are to leave the candles and their holders clean and prepared, the house swept, the dishes and knives washed, all other necessary items prepared, and stew cooked on the Friday for consumption on the Saturday - just as is the custom of all those of the race of the marranos. Moreover by this present letter we order all the said marranos or any one of them to receive you in their councils, meetings, and assemblies. You are to attain and gain, by means of any kind of deception, flattery, and trick, any royal office such as an alcaldia or regimiento or juraderia or escribania publica so that, by virtue of the said offices, you can enjoy the wealth and revenues of the city, town, or place where you have gained office, cheating the old genteel Christians with subtle and deceiving words and setting them to murdering one another. We also authorize you and your offspring to become priests with cure /

¹ This attack on the conversos' lack of religious conviction was particularly relevant to the blasé conversos at court. See Baer, History, ii.274.

cure of souls by fraud and cunning so that, by listening to the confessions of the old and genteel Christians, you can learn their secret sins. We also authorize you and your offspring to become chemists, physicians, and surgeons. Thus, by pretext of curing and attending to the illnesses of any old Christian, you will be able to work for and procure the death of the old Christians and lessen their numbers. This you will do in the manner of the marranos, who do this because of hatred and enmity and also because they wish to marry the wives of the old Christians, whom they kill in order to acquire their goods and wealth and in order to defile and dirty their pure blood. Moreover you can attempt to acquire the offices of those who pass on from this life as a result of your diligent ministrations - all this so that those of the Hebrew race and marranos can attain office ... Furthermore you and your offspring can learn Hebrew knowledge in the synagogue of the Jews or in any other place where they teach or read this wisdom. You can also arrange your funeral according to Jewish custom ... and can accompany the bodies of Jews to their burials and there demonstrate your grief according to their custom. After demonstrating your sorrow and participating in Jewish ceremonies, you can eat those foods which the Jews and marranos eat, sitting down with them on the floor as is their custom. We authorize you to attend the feast days of the Jews and marranos and drink the wine of the benediction. Furthermore you can enter into churches and other sacred places without any devotion and, instead of a book of devotions or a psalter, you can carry a tax register of the alcabalas which you have farmed, pretending as is the custom of the marranos that you are praying the penitential psalms. By this present letter we also wish to use in this case our own will, certain knowledge and absolute royal power in order to dispense you from any penalty in this world relating to false oaths, lies, and falsehoods - all of which you may use in order to cheat the old Christians and advance your own interests and those /

those of your relatives ... We also authorize you to assume the surname of any lineage which you may choose. In this way you will escape the name of your marrano forebears and, by using an accepted Christian name, you can defraud people while still using your Jewish¹ name in secret, as the other marranos do ...

This satirical letter dated from the same year as Pero Sarmiento's Sentencia which attempted to deprive the conversos from holding public office in Toledo. The Sentencia did not attempt to deal with the problem on religious grounds. The solution envisaged by the Sentencia was brutally simple - the converso remained a Jew despite his conversion and should therefore be barred from holding any public office.² The solution put forward in 1449 by Pero Sarmiento was, therefore, a racial solution and as such became the precedent for a whole series of later measures.³ The tolerance of the first half of the fifteenth century was giving way to an increasingly bitter racialism in the large towns.

1 I have made this translation from my notes of a Castilian version in the biblioteca nacional. Apparently the document has, however, been printed by H. Pflaum in Revue des Etudes Juives, lxxxvi (1928)

2 See E. Benito Ruano, 'La "Sentencia-Estatuto" de Pero Sarmiento contra los Conversos Toledanos', R.U.M., vi (1957), 281, 298.

3 Ibid, pp. 298-306.

CHAPTER VI

THE KING AND HIS SUBJECTS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the structure of politics in terms of the social and economic problems which have been examined in previous chapters. It is not my purpose to argue that fifteenth century Castilians saw political problems in terms of rising prices and declining or fixed incomes. The political issues were seen in political or constitutional terms and men fashioned their arguments with a vocabulary which included few economic concepts.¹ Yet political issues and clashes were indirectly conditioned by social and economic problems and the chief protagonists were well aware of their own problems of income.

1) Constitutional Issues

Constitutional issues still await a detailed examination, but historians have naturally chosen the conflict between Crown and nobility to provide the principal element of continuity in their chronological accounts of the period.² Accordingly, the political history of the period /

1 Learned men were recruited to fashion political arguments. See, for example, Mem. Divs. Habs., pp. 114-5.

2 For a chronological summary see below Appendix GG, p. 659.

period is explained in terms of a growth in royal power which provoked a noble reaction aiming to restrict this power. A brief examination of the 'royalist' view of kingship and the programmes of the nobility will help to clarify the nature of the constitutional issues.

i) Royal absolutism¹

In fifteenth century Castile there were certain prevalent and widely accepted ideas about kingship. In the first place the laws, from the Siete Partidas onwards, emphasised the king's position as the head of the corpus mysticum.² The sacerdotal nature of kingship was also stressed by the laws and by the monarchs. Both John II and Henry IV continued to remind recalcitrant subjects that justice was entrusted to the king by God and that the king was God's vicar on earth.³ Both kings often acted 'as king and sovereign lord not recognising a superior in temporal matters'.⁴ Even the opponents and critics /

- 1 Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.147 hesitates to use the word 'absolutism' on the grounds that it is usually applied to different historical periods. This seems to me an odd argument in the light of some of the literature on absolutism. See, for example, R.H.Jones, The royal policy of Richard II. Absolutism in the later middle ages (Oxford, 1968) and F.Hartung and R.Mousnier, 'Quelques problèmes concernant la monarchie absolue', X.Cong. Int.di Scienze Storiche (Rome, 1955), iv, 3-55.
- 2 See, for example, the acts of the cortes of Olmedo in 1445 which are discussed below pp. 474-77.
- 3 See, for example, John II's comments to Alvaro de Luna's widow, C.D.R.A.H., 70-1 (xxxvii, 22 May 1453).
- 4 See, for example, A.D.M., Vill., leg. 4, doc. 19, John II's confirmation of a mayorazgo, 22 April 1422. Henry IV's letter to Paul II in C.D.R.A.H., 498 (cxxiv, 14 July 1465) suggests that at one time he may have considered recognizing the superiority of the pope.

critics of the monarchy accepted the views concerning the divine origin of royal power and the king's position as God's lieutenant on earth.¹

From the second decade of the fifteenth century, however, the monarchy clearly attempted to establish absolute royal power.² The king not only acted 'as king and sovereign lord not recognising a superior in temporal matters' but also by virtue 'of my own wish, certain knowledge and absolute royal power' (de mi propio motu e cierta ciencia e poderío real absoluto). The frequent and constant use of the poderío real absoluto only serves to emphasise that there was a continuity of purpose and a deliberate royal policy. The sources for the ideas involved in the use of the absolute royal power still remain to be studied.³

What did the absolute royal power entail? Maravall has given a definition of it based on the testament of Isabella.

It is a power which is essentially above human or positive law and thus carries with it the power to make laws, to accord exemption from all or a part of them, and to revise them "aunque en sí contengan que no se pueden revocar" ("even though they contain a provision that they may not be repealed").⁴

This /

1 See below Appendix FF, pp. 649-53.

2 Isolated examples of the use of the absolute royal power certainly pre-date 1420 - see, for example, García de Valdeavellano, Historia de las Instituciones, p. 427 and A.D.M., Feria, leg. 55, doc. 22, 8 Oct. 1409. The emergence of a consistent use and policy, however, coincided with John II's emergence from his minority and provoked the first complaints: Cortes, iii. 30-2 (1, 1420).

3 See below Appendix FF, pp. 649-53.

4 J.A. Maravall, 'The origins of the modern state', J.W.H., vi (1961), 801.

This definition is one that can equally be applied to the use of absolute royal power by John II and Henry IV.

The frequent use of the royal dispensing power is not particularly remarkable since the use of such a prerogative by most monarchies in western Europe was usual.¹ In Castile the dispensing power seems to have been most frequently used in royal grants of privileges. Inevitably, therefore, the use of the absolute royal power in such cases was linked to one of the chief political issues - the control and distribution of rewards and favours. Both John II and Henry IV used their absolute royal power to remove all obstacles to their arbitrary confiscations of opponents' lands and wealth, and the distribution of these to faithful royal supporters.² This was a power which the Crown found extremely useful in times of crisis. In 1453, for example, when John II decided to rid himself of Alvaro de Luna he declared his decisions to be binding and dispensed with all obstacles by virtue 'of my own wish, certain knowledge and plenary absolute royal power'.³ This and other similar actions fell outside the normal legal processes and were justified by the wielding of absolute power by God's vicar on earth.

Did /

1 Further details on the dispensing power in Castile, below Appendix FF, pp. 449-53.

2 For examples of grants of wealth to supporters from such confiscations see A.D.M., Alc. Duc., leg. 55, doc. 17, 1 Sept. 1423; *ibid.*, doc. 30, 10 June 1447; B.N., MS., 6388, fols. 419r-423v, 25 Sept. 1453.

3 C.D.R., A.H., 49-55 (xxix, 14 April 1453).

Did the absolute royal power mean that the king was 'essentially above human or positive law' and that he had 'the power to make laws'?¹ There can be no doubt that the monarchy consciously attempted to establish this position. The traditional view was that the king was not above the law and could not by himself make laws. The making, revising, and annulment of laws was a matter for the king and the cortes. During the fourteenth century this point was on the whole confirmed. In 1351 Pedro I agreed to a cortes petition that individuals, who obtained royal letters contrary to the laws made by the king and cortes, should be fined.² In 1379 John I accepted the point that such letters should not be obeyed and that changes or revisions of the laws could only be carried out in the cortes.³ In 1387, at the cortes of Bribiesca, he also agreed and ordered that royal letters dispensing with laws were invalid.⁴

The fifteenth century cortes rarely managed to extract similar concessions⁵ and both John II and Henry IV were largely successful in breaking through these restrictions. Once again it was the formula of the poder real absoluto which was used to make laws which were to be as valid as if they had been made in the cortes. John II, for /

1 For a discussion of the limitations on absolute royal power see below Appendix FF, pp. 649-53

2 Cortes, ii.21(36,1351).

3 Ibid, ii.299(37,1379)

4 Ibid, ii.371-2(9,1387).

5 See below, pp 479-83.

for example, could cite one of his own laws to the cortes which clearly showed how the royal absolutism worked:-

Therefore I, wishing to provide a convenient remedy on this matter, by the present pragmatic sanction, which I wish and order and it is my pleasure and will that it should have the force and vigour of law and should be observed as law just as if it had been ordered and established and published in the cortes, order and command and wish and determine by my own wish, certain knowledge, and absolute royal power ...¹

The king, therefore, could make laws así como si fuera fecha en cortes.² The royal will could be imposed without restriction and the cumbersome machinery involved in holding a cortes could be avoided. In this respect the chronicle of Alvaro de Luna gives an interesting account of how the laws of Guadalajara in 1436 were determined and then promulgated. John II and his immediate advisers decided to reform government.

And without waiting to hold a cortes, the king drew up the ordinances ... And then the king ordered that the said laws should be published and observed in his court on pain of great punishments; and he ordered his letters to be issued so that the same should be done in the cities and towns of his kingdoms, all of which was done as ordered.³

The king, therefore, could use his absolute royal power to dispense with legal obstacles and even to legislate unilaterally /

1 Cortes, iii.109(19,1431).

2 See, for example, the laws on finance and justice in Escorial, X.II.19,, fols.9V-11V and 21V-22V, 25 May 1427 and 25 Jan.1432.

3 Cron.Luna, pp.148-9. The text of the ordinances in fact states that they are to be laws 'como si por mi fuesen fechas e ordenadas e promulgadas en cortes ...'; B.N., MS., 13259, fol.186V.

unilaterally. Yet this is not sufficient to substantiate a deliberate and systematic royal policy aiming at absolutism and it is this point which must now be examined.

In 1445 John II and Alvaro de Luna won the decisive battle of Olmedo. With the opposition shattered, a strong assertion of the theory of royal power would not have been surprising. Yet it was on the eve of battle that the king and Luna decided to make a full assertion of the royal power. The cortes had already been summoned and, meeting in the royal camp, the procuradores themselves were made to act as the mouthpiece of the king.¹

The procuradores first of all recalled the existence of the rebellion against the Crown and then condemned it as being contrary to the polity and to the king's majesty:-

... some of your subjects and people joined in rebellion, forgetting the natural law by which even the bees have a prince and the cranes follow a leader whom they revere and obey. They also forget the divine law which expressly prohibits and forbids that anyone should dare to touch his king and prince as he is anointed by God; nor should anyone detract or say anything evil about him or even think it in his mind; instead he should be held to be God's vicar and honoured as being excellent; no one should dare to resist him because those who resist the king are seen to wish to resist the ordinance of God to which everyone is bound and tied, not only fearing the wrath of God and the evil and punishment which can affect them as a result of such an action /

¹ For the acts of this Cortes and the quotations which follow see Cortes, iii.456-494 (1445).

action, but also for the tranquility of their consciences; those who do the opposite, refusing to obey their princes and kings, are because of this accused and guilty of murder. They also despise the sacred canon law and the royal and imperial laws which with great efficacy order that the king and his lordship, obedience, and pre-eminence be guarded and revered above all other things in this world and that he be served and honoured. All of this being set aside, these people have persevered in their stubbornness saying and pretending that they did so on account of a law of your kingdom which is in the second Partida ...

The law to which the procuradores referred, seemed to imply that the king should be protected against his own misguided policies and that it was his subjects' duty to afford such protection.¹ After citing the law, the procuradores attacked the rebels and accused them of deliberately misinterpreting the law. All laws - natural, divine, canon, and civil - they alleged, clearly prohibited such a rebellion. Moreover, the particular law in question was only one of a whole series of laws which condemned rebellion. A selection of such laws was then cited in order to stress the wickedness of rebellion and to provide a weighty refutation of the pretensions of the rebels. In the context of these laws, the procuradores argued:-

... it /

1 See S.P., Pt.ii,tit.xiii,leg.xxv.

... it would be abominable, sacrilegious ... contrary to God and divine and human law ... if the king, whose heart is in the hands of God who guides him and inclines him to his wish, the king being his vicar and his lieutenant on earth, ... the king having all laws and rights under him (so si) since he holds his power not from men but from God whose place he holds in all temporal matters ... should be made subject to his vassals and subjects ... especially since he does not recognise a superior in temporal matters save God alone ...

The procuradores had now reviewed the whole situation and had virtually stated the divine right theory of kingship. Since the king was above the law and held his power directly from God, the concluding petition of the cortes was logical.

Therefore ... we very humbly petition your highness that ... interpreting and declaring the said law of the Partida and any others which might in this way be misunderstood, you revoke them by virtue of your certain knowledge and your own will and absolute royal power ...

At the cortes of Olmedo in 1445 it was the procuradores who were ostensibly responsible for demanding an assertion of royal absolutism. In fact the procuradores were merely repeating assertions which John II himself had expressed and propagated years earlier. In 1439, for example, the king had bluntly expressed the same views to the great nobility and, fourteen years after the cortes of Olmedo, Alvaro de Luna fell victim to the arbitrary absolute royal power /

power which he himself had helped to build up.¹ Carlyle's comments on the proceedings of the cortes of Olmedo can in fact be taken to apply to a consistent royal policy:

It would be difficult to find a more emphatic assertion of the doctrine of the "Divine Right" of the King, and of his absolute authority as above the Law.²

ii) The justifications for revolt

The success of the Castilian kings in aspiring to an absolutism based on divine right may be gauged by the fact that the monarchy's opponents did not on the whole effectively contradict the royal claims. They accepted that the king could wield absolute power, but distinguished between the use of this power and tyranny.³ They accepted that they were obliged to obey the king, but they also argued that they had a duty to advise him and to protect him from his own actions.⁴ They accepted that the king did not recognise a superior in temporal matters, but they advised him to study the histories of kings who had made similar claims and yet lost their crowns because of their misguided /

1 See Appendix F^k below pp. 652-3

2 R.W. and A.J. Carlyle, A history of medieval political theory in the West (Edinburgh, 1936), vi. 188.

3 Such a distinction is made in the preamble of a letter by the Aragonese party in 1440: Cron. Juan II, pp. 560-1.

4 Mosén Diego de Valera began a letter to Henry IV with such an argument: Mem. Divs. Habs., p. 72.

misguided actions.¹

These arguments were not consistently or effectively used. More cogently and frequently, it was argued that the royal powers were not in dispute but that they had been usurped by a favourite. Often, the word 'favourite' was used merely to designate those who were the king's trusted advisers. The argument, however, justified open opposition and revolt since the king and kingdom needed protection against the usurpations of royal power by incompetent and evil favourites.² In 1440, for example, a long and bitter account of Alvaro de Luna's shortcomings served to justify the opposition of the great nobility

because you, sire, have wished to submit your royal power, both your absolute power and ordinary power, to your constable.

Nine years later the rebellion of the town of Toledo was similarly justified on the grounds that

your majesty knows very well that for the last thirty years and more don Alvaro de Luna, your constable, has tyrannically dissipated, devastated, and daily usurps and devastates your kingdoms and lordships, usurping to himself the government and rule, and glory and powers of your Crown, which only belong to your highness.

iii) /

1 See C.D.R.A.H., 487 (cxv, 10 May 1465); Mem. Divs. Habs., pp. 74-5.

2 The argument is well expressed in Benito Ruano, Toledo, p. 147.

3 See Cron. Juan II, pp. 560-2.

4 Halconero, p. 521 and Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp. 38-43, 155.

iii) The decline of the cortes

Leaders of rebellious noble alliances, however, while finding it easy to justify their actions, found it much harder to impose practical limitations on royal power since no constitutional machinery existed which could be easily adapted to this end.

The cortes certainly did not act as an effective check on the monarchy. It is true that occasionally the cortes appeared to be acting as a limitation on the royal power. In the cortes of 1420, 1440, 1442, 1451, and 1455, for example, protests were made about the use of the royal absolute power and in some cases the Crown was apparently forced to agree to limitations on its power.¹ Yet on the whole, an examination of the powers and procedures of the cortes shows that they were too weak to play an independent role in politics.²

There were two matters of general importance over which the cortes could theoretically wield considerable power - legislation and taxation.³ It has already been seen /

1 An example of how such evidence can give the misleading impression that the cortes maintained their powers in the fifteenth century in Carlyle, op.cit., vi.133-6.

2 The view that the cortes declined drastically in the fifteenth century is now generally accepted: see Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.14-15 and Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.147 which reflect the findings of W.Piskorski, Las Cortes de Castilla (Barcelona, 1930).

3 But see Piskorski, op.cit., pp.73-4, 188, 193.

seen that both John II and Henry IV managed successfully to legislate by virtue of their own absolute royal power.¹ It is true that they specified that these laws were to be observed 'as if they had been made in cortes'. Yet this was a minor concession to the once prevalent situation whereby only the king and the cortes could legislate and such legislation could only be repealed by the cortes. Despite their protests, even the procuradores of the cortes recognised the existence of the new royal power to legislate. In 1455, for example, they asked Henry IV to confirm his father's laws - both the laws he had made in the cortes and those which he had made by virtue of his own power.²

The need to obtain the consent of the cortes for the imposition of certain forms of taxation became established in the fourteenth century. It seems probable, however, that the monarchy failed to challenge this limitation on its authority during the fifteenth century precisely because it was not a limitation of practical importance. In fact the consent of the cortes was only necessary for the levying of three taxes - the pedido, moneda, and moneda forera. The consent of the cortes was invariably granted before the presentation of grievances to the king. Attempts made by the cortes to limit the use to which the taxes /

¹ See above pp. 472-4.

² Piskorski, op.cit., p. 145.

taxes could be used were disregarded by the monarchy. All other taxation was levied without the consent of the cortes. Significantly, the greatest source of royal income, the alcabala, which had been subject to the consent of the cortes during the fourteenth century, escaped the control of the cortes completely during the fifteenth century and was levied regularly each year without consent.¹

The lack of power of the cortes was paralleled by the degree of control which the Crown exercised over procedure.² In practice the cortes were small assemblies who met together with the 'court' - that is, those nobles, ecclesiastics, and letrados who were court officials or members of the royal council. The procuradores of these towns were either members of the patrician oligarchies or were directly nominated by the king. Their expenses were paid by the Crown. Nevertheless they theoretically constituted a representative assembly of the three estates of the kingdom. They obediently voted the taxes which the king demanded, presented petitions which were examined by the letrados, received vague assurances about complaints contained in these petitions, and dispersed at the will of the king until the latter /

¹ Ibid, pp.103,107,150,154,156-161. On one occasion, in 1420, John II levied taxes without consent and subsequently agreed not to do the same again.

² See Appendix FF below pp.654-8.

latter should again choose to summon another cortes.

The very weakness of the cortes explains the sometimes bewildering changes of attitude displayed by the procuradores towards the Crown. Since the machinery and procedure of the cortes was controlled by the Crown, changes in the balance of power at court were reflected in the cortes. It has already been noted how John II and Alvaro de Luna used the cortes of Olmedo in 1445 to endorse their policy of absolutism.¹ From the Infante Enrique in 1420 down to Juan Pacheco in Henry IV's reign, the same use of the cortes was made by opposition leaders once power had been acquired at court.² The nobility used the cortes to publicize concessions which they had already obtained from the Crown. Yet they never envisaged the cortes as an institution which could be powerful enough, or meet with sufficient regularity, to impose control on the monarchy. In 1440, for example, the Aragonese party used the cortes of Valladolid to endorse their plan of control over royal government. The king was unpleasantly reminded by the procuradores of the unhappy experiences of the monarchy in France and the 'reformers' put forward their proposals. Yet, even at this /

1 See above pp. 474-7

2 See Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp. 74-5, 258-9.

this high point of apparent opposition by the cortes, the procuradores were merely confirming the plans of those in control at court. These plans envisaged control of the royal council by the nobility and the role of the cortes remained insignificant.¹ In fact it was by controlling the royal council that the fifteenth century nobility hoped to control the monarchy.

iv) Control of the royal council²

The great nobility of Castile, like their counterparts in France and England, attempted to control the monarchy by controlling the royal council.³ The royal council offered the most effective opportunities for attempting this limitation of the monarchy. In theory there was a well established tradition that the king should rule with the advice of a council. Moreover, unlike the cortes, the council was an institution which functioned regularly, closely accompanied the king, and had its meetings /

1 Cortes, iii.368-92(1440); Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.162-3.

2 There were several types of council at varying periods - a council of justice, a secret council, a royal council proper, and an embryonic council for the military orders. Here the term 'royal council' refers to the body which helped the king to exercise general political control.

3 At a rough estimate there were some fourteen coups d'état or major changes in the royal council during John II's reign alone.

meetings, procedures and secretariat formalised in ordinances.¹

The degree to which conciliar procedures were formalised also provided the opportunity for stressing the implication that the council gave proper and collective advice to the king, as against the incompetent advice of favourites.² Throughout the century these 'favourites' naturally provided the obvious link between the royal councils and the monarch.³ On occasions this situation led to the existence of an informal but regular inner council. Thus a council of fixed membership and powers could be set against individual favourites and 'inner councils'.⁴

Once the council was controlled, political decisions could be given a semblance of legality. In 1420, for example, the Infante Enrique used the council as a cover for his more dictatorial acts. Indeed he even managed to combine the role of the council with his propaganda to the cortes. By placing some of the representatives of the cortes in the council he gave expression to the vague feeling that the council should in some way be representative.

At /

1 For ordinances of 1406, 1432, 1436, 1442, 1459 and 1465 see Escorial, 2.II.14., fols. 77R-79R, X.II.14., 105R-115R, X.II.19., fols. 20R-21V; B.N., MS., 13259 fols. 185R, 332R-336R; C.D.R.A.H., 355-479(cix, 1465).

2 The very degree of formalisation itself derived from attempts to control the monarchy.

3 A good example of Alvaro de Luna in just such a role, Halconero, pp. 133-5.

4 Henry IV, for example, created an inner council made up of the archbishop of Toledo, Juan Pacheco, and Diego Arias de Avila; Escorial, X.II.14., fols. 105R-107R.

At the same time, however, he persuaded this council to vote him 20,000 marcs and thus usurped a power reserved to the cortes proper.¹ Other nobles may not have been so skilful in their manipulation of the council, yet the council remained the favourite instrument for legalizing changes in political power. The coup d'état at Rámaga in 1443, for example, began with the king of Navarre summoning the council and ended with the council imprisoning some of John II's officials.² Even John II himself used the council in this way when he ordered that the decision to execute Alvaro de Luna should be signed by those letrados who were members of the council.³

Despite the apparent advantages, however, attempts to control the royal council met with serious obstacles. The cortes had managed, during periods of the fourteenth century, to bring pressure to bear on the process of appointing councillors. By the fifteenth century, however, the power of the cortes had declined and all that remained of this intervention were ideas as to the general nature /

1 See Suárez Fernández, Relaciones entre Portugal y Castilla, p.39. The money was never collected since the infante's period of power only lasted from July to November 1420. The view that buenos omes from the cortes should be represented in the council was a legacy from the fourteenth century - in the fifteenth century the view was never put into effect save by the infante. See Piskorski, op.cit., pp.177-8, 180-4; Cortes, iii.20-1 (18, 1419), 56 (1425), 120-1 (5, 1432).

2 Halconero, pp.435-9.

3 C.D.R.A.H., 74-7 (xxxviii, 1453). The king, indeed, seems to have preferred arresting his enemies at council meetings: see, for example, Halconero, pp.39, 123-5, 248-9.

nature of the royal council.¹ There was, moreover, a clear distinction throughout the fifteenth century between honorific and effective councillors. Many lay and ecclesiastical aristocrats were, by convention, honorific councillors. They held the title of councillor but lacked the substance of power enjoyed by the effective councillors.² These latter were appointed by the king alone and no one in theory had a right to be an effective councillor. Similarly the king could take his advice from anyone whom he wished to consult. John II stated this position very clearly, in 1439, when he argued that, although it was customary in Castile, as in other countries, for the king to rule with the advice of the council, this did not prevent him from taking advice from anyone else in the kingdom or from continually consulting Alvaro de Luna. Similarly, of course, an 'absolute' king did not have to accept the advice of his council.³

To overcome these problems formulae were devised which were written into sentencias or judgements. In theory the sentencias were the result of arbitration on the /

1 See above p. 485, n. 1.

2 John II, for example, appointed don Pedro del Burgo, abbot of Sahagún, to the council and provided that all future abbots of Sahagún should be members of the royal council: A.H.N., Clero, Pergs., carp. 943, doc. 16, 23 March 1454. The appointment of the king of Granada to the Castilian council could even be envisaged: Mem. Divs. Habs., p. 31.

3 The whole text of this important letter in Halconero, pp. 263-76.

the issues dividing the monarchy and its opponents. In reality the sentencias represented the attempts of the victorious rebels to limit royal power. The sentencias dealt with many grievances formulated against the royal government and sometimes appeared to embody the complaints of the three estates of the whole kingdom.¹ The important points, however, were those which concerned the great nobility and their attempts to impose control on the membership and powers of the council.

The membership of the council had to be determined clearly, if the fruits of political victory were not to be lost between powerless honorific councils on the one hand and inner councils on the other. The fifteenth century ordinances - both those inspired by the monarchy and those inspired by the nobility - envisaged an effective council containing between eleven and sixteen members.² When the Crown's opponents were victorious, they determined who these councillors were to be and arranged for a suitable balancing of faction interests within the council. Yet such arrangements were the direct result of political victory or pressure and there was no permanent machinery to limit royal power once this political pressure slackened.³

The /

1 See, for example, the sentencia of 1465 in C.D.R.A.H., 355-479 (cix).

2 See the ordinances cited above p. 484, n. 1.

3 In 1420, for example, membership was arranged to accommodate the three main political factions at court: Cron. Luna., p. 45. For an attempt to devise a regular procedure for filling vacancies see C.D.R.A.H., 407-8 (cix, 1465).

The attempts to control the membership of the council were accompanied by attempts to make the council the centre of government. This entailed curtailing the royal power, and increasing the powers of the council. The provisions of the victorious Aragonese party in 1442 serve as an example. The power of the Crown in ecclesiastical appointments was transferred to the council.¹ John II was virtually prohibited from granting privileges on his own initiative. Control of privileges, and to a large extent this meant control of Crown revenues, was now vested in the council. All privileges could only be granted with the consent of the council or by a majority vote within the council. John II was left with the power to initiate expenditure of a trivial nature.² All judicial cases affecting the great nobility were made dependent on the council for their determination and the sentencia definitiva had to be examined before the king in his council.³ The decisions of the council were to be kept in a register and the secretaries were only to draw up letters on the basis of decisions made in the council.⁴ Similar powers were vested in the royal council /

1 B.N.,MS.,13259,fols.332R-333R.

2 Ibid, fol.332R and V. This part of the ordinance is also printed in Cortes, iii.402-4 (2,4,1442). These cortes were in general used to endorse controls attempted since at least 1440.

3 B.N.,MS.,13259,fol.332V.

4 Ibid, fols.333R-334V.

council by the sentencia of 1465.¹

The constitutional provisions of the sentencias appeared impressive. Yet in the last analysis these provisions were only effective as long as the realities of political power made control of the royal council feasible. To control the king the council had to be controlled, and this control could only be maintained by the ability to exert a continuous threat of political rebellion or revolution. Moreover, the forces of opposition had to be united. As soon as factions appeared a 'favourite', such as Alvaro de Luna, could play off factions of the nobility against each other in the council, while retaining royal influence and protection.² Time and again constitutional limitations, imposed by victorious rebel leaders, were disregarded by the monarchy as soon as their political power appeared to be crumbling. Was this not, after all, a return to the normal situation by which an 'absolute' king chose his own councillors and accepted or rejected their advice?

v) /

1 C.D.R.A.H., 368, 387, 428-30 (cix, 1465)

2 See, for example, Luna's scheme for rotating membership in 1419: Cron.Luna, p.34.

v) The deposition of Henry IV.

The repeated failures of the nobility to control the royal powers by using the council raised the problem of alternative and more extreme methods. In January 1465, Henry IV was forced to accept the most impressive of the fifteenth century sentencias. The sentencia of Medina del Campo contained proposals for reforming a whole series of 'abuses' which affected not only the nobility, but the Church, the towns, the economy, and the administration of justice.¹ Yet the very next month the king issued an order declaring the whole sentencia to be null and void.² Within the ranks of the rebel nobility the idea had already been put forward that more effective use should be made of Henry IV's half brother, Alfonso. On the 5th of June, in the 'farse' at Avila, Henry IV's effigy was deposed by some of the nobility and Alfonso XII was proclaimed king.³

The deposition of Henry IV was justified by its perpetrators with two basic arguments. In the first place the king was guilty of heinous crimes, a long list of which were read out publicly at the deposition at Avila.⁴

This /

1 This sentencia has been described by one historian as a 'verdadera Carta magna': Suárez, Los Trastámaras, p.261. The full text of the sentencia is in C.D.R.A.H., 355-479 (cix, 1465).

2 Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.262-5.

3 On these events see ibid, pp.256-67.

4 Ibid, p.267.

This argument was not directed against the institution of monarchy but against the person of the king. Inevitably the word 'tyrant' was linked to this argument and reference was made to the fate of Pedro the Cruel.¹ Secondly, it was argued that the monarchy of Castile, as an institution, was elective and that the deposition was therefore legal.

The power of the nobility and people, argued Mosén Diego de Valera,

to elect and depose a king, and for far lesser reasons than those which can be proved against King Henry, was no innovation in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon, as could easily be proved by canonical authorities.²

The new attempt to limit royal power by 'electing' an alternative king suffered from severe disabilities. The deposition of Henry IV was the work of a faction and did not gain general acceptance. For many of the nobility, clergy, and towns, Henry IV remained the legitimate king whose cause was also supported by the papacy. The gravest disability, however, was the nature of the 'elected' monarchy which had been created. It was immediately apparent that the 'election' was nothing more than a cynical attempt to legalize the grants and privileges which the electors bestowed on themselves. The sharing of /

¹ See, for example, Mem.Divs.Hazs., pp.97-9.

² Ibid, p.98.

of these profits, moreover, was authorized by the boy king's absolute royal power which was controlled by his electors but was not constitutionally limited. The failure of the 'elective' experiment was complete. The argument that the monarchy was 'elective' was clearly untenable in view of the laws of succession. The failure of the rebels to limit the royal power in constitutional terms, ensured that the expedient of election would not be again considered as a practical possibility.

The repeated failure of the nobility to use their victories in order to limit the powers of the monarchy as an institution goes far in helping to explain the sustained growth of royal power. The aim of the nobility was clearly not to limit absolutism but to use this absolutism for their own purposes. It was precisely for this reason that the nobility did not support the cortes.¹ The deposition of Henry IV did not alter this situation substantially. Professor Benito Ruano is surely right when he argues that there was no attempt, during all this period, to attack the principles of monarchy - the rebel leaders, indeed, continually stressed their respect and fidelity to the institution of monarchy.²

The /

1 The nobility, for example, were only too willing to support the monarchy's total disregard of the cortes' attempts to prevent the alienation of crown lands and revenues.

2 Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.155-6.

The powers of the monarchy consequently remained theoretically intact. When members of the nobility managed to gain control at court, they used these powers themselves. In 1467, for example, the nobility used Alfonso XII's 'own will, certain knowledge, and absolute royal power' to invalidate oaths and homages paid to Henry IV and to pardon misdeeds committed by their own followers.¹ Queen Isabella was to receive these powers intact. She did not have to struggle to gain their acceptance since they were not subject to dispute. The real problem consisted in determining who was to control and wield royal absolutism, and the answer to this problem inevitably rested with the characters and determination of the monarchs themselves.

2) Politics and the General Economic Background

The discussion on constitutional issues has been necessary because most accounts of the political history of Castile in the fifteenth century imply that these were the issues that motivated the civil wars and disturbances.

At /

¹ This example in C.D.R.A.H., 528-36 (cxli, 20 Jan. 1467)

It is true that the monarchy formulated policies of absolutism which profoundly affected the terms in which protagonists expressed themselves. Yet the nobility did not put forward a programme of constitutionalism and their real aims in attempting to control royal absolutism remain obscure. Moreover, the constitutional issues fail to provide any adequate connection between the central issues and the equally important issues which agitated the towns and countryside of the kingdom. To provide an adequate interpretation it is necessary to examine the effects of economic factors on politics and society generally.

Above all it is necessary to examine the evidence of prices once again. It has already been noted that the prices of grain and cloth are given in money of account and that they may be deceptive as far as the true economic and secular trend is concerned. Yet these same prices are accurate and, indeed, indispensable for the social and political realities which faced contemporaries.¹ These are prices which underline the important debasements of the Castilian coinage and draw attention to those crucial years of crisis when monetary anarchy was closely linked to political and social anarchy.

The /

¹ See above p.87.

The long term nominal price movement seems to divide naturally into two periods. From 1400 to 1435 the price movement remained fairly stable but from 1435 to 1480 there was a general rise in prices. Within these two general periods two further movements stand out. The years 1407-14 saw a sharp price movement and the years 1448-80 witnessed a high degree of price inflation which reached chronic proportions by 1460.¹ These price movements coincided with the main periods of debasements of the coinage and the periods of agrarian crises with their associated phenomena of hunger, plague, and epidemics. The agrarian crises of 1434-38 coincided with the beginnings of the price rise and the period of sharpest price inflation was also the period when, increasingly, hardly a year was exempt from the effects of agrarian crises.² The reign of Henry IV (1454-74) was marked by constant debasement of the coinage. Indeed in the 1460's - at the height of agrarian crises and price inflation - private as well as royal mints were busy producing a debased coinage. The count of Benavente, for example, minted coins in Villalón and Alfonso XII minted his own coinage. Inevitably the lure of quick profits enticed men to further debasements.³

It /

1 See Appendices B and C below pp.557-63

2 See above pp.77-82 and Appendix A below pp.554-6.

3 See above p.88 and L.Sáez, Demostración del valor de las monedas pp.2-3.

Is it not significant, therefore, that most of the evidence cited in support of the 'catastrophic anarchy' view of the fifteenth century Castile dates from the period 1448-1480? In this connection it is worth glancing at Benito Ruano's excellent analysis of the disturbances in Toledo during the fifteenth century. 'There is hardly a year during these two decades (1454-74)', he writes,

which is not affected by some dramatic or violent event. As a whole the period is like a nightmare of fears, calamities and upsets from which salvation was only to be achieved - as for the whole of Spain - during the following reign.¹

The dates 1454-74 are the conventional ones of Henry IV's reign and, in fact, Benito Ruano devotes forty nine pages to the troubles of 1449. The period 1400-1448 is covered in a mere twenty pages while the anarchy of the period 1449-74 is discussed in over eighty seven pages. The political history of the period does, in fact, coincide with the pattern of price movements, debasements, and agrarian crises. It seems plausible to argue that, after a period of monetary and political instability in the late fourteenth century,² the period 1400-1445 was conducive /

¹ Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.84.

² Within the long term movement of debasements during the later middle ages two periods stand out. The first period covers the years 1370-1395. Henry II (1369-79) debased the coinage to pay for debts incurred in wars against Pedro I. John I (1379-90) debased the coinage still further to pay for his wars against Lancaster and the Portuguese. Price inflation reached chronic proportions and stability was not restored until measures, introduced in 1391 by Henry III (1390-1406), began to take effect in subsequent years. The second period coincided with the reign of Henry IV (1454-74).

conducive to political stability whereas the period 1445-1480 led to hardships, impoverishment, and political chaos.

The relationship between political issues and the economic background was, however, far more complicated. Was debasement of the coinage the cause or the consequence of violent political upheaval? It would be rash to claim that the civil and foreign wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were caused by debasements and price inflation. On the contrary these wars - for example John I's wars against Lancaster - may have caused the monarchy to resort to debasement. But the wars did not inevitably lead to debasements and it cannot be argued that other forms of political disturbances in the towns and countryside prompted a policy of currency manipulation. In short the relationship was a complex one in which causes and effects had interchangeable roles. The simplest and directest relationships are best dealt with first.

3) Popular movements

1) The chronology of urban revolt

Urban uprisings were directly connected to the hardships imposed by rising prices and shortages of grain. In many cases it is hard to separate popular movements from /

from more complicated political situations. There can be no doubt, however, that urban agitation grew progressively more serious during the fifteenth century. It was a problem that caused concern to the procuradores of the cortes. In 1473, for example, they reminded Henry IV of the seriousness of the problem because

we see from experience that the people, especially the common and lower sort of people, have reached such a degree of audacity, bad living, contempt for your justice and contempt of our holy catholic faith, that they dare to rise up in pursuit of vain desires and fantastic pretences. They cause and create riots and fights with their neighbours and fellowmen, and if they manage to carry the day, they rob them, take their possessions, and throw them out of the cities, towns and places where they live.¹

Table XXVII² attempts to list those urban political movements in which popular elements played an important or preponderant role. There can be no doubt that some urban popular movements are missing from the list and that the relative importance of each movement is not apparent. Yet, despite these qualifications, the chronology of urban revolt speaks for itself. There is an almost complete identification with the patterns of debasements /

¹ Cortes, iii.878-9(27,1473).

² See Appendix DD below pp.639-40

debasements, price rises, and agrarian crises which have been discussed. The serious urban disturbances of 1391 coincided with the peak of the debasement crisis of 1370-1395, and it may well be suspected that they coincided with the peak of the price rises resulting from these debasements. From 1400 to 1449 there is no evidence of serious popular urban agitation. The disturbances in Córdoba in 1406 are tabulated on the authority of Amador de los Ríos who cites no evidence for them and, indeed, does not even discuss them.¹ The period 1449-1474, on the other hand, contains a whole plethora of riots and popular uprisings. These began with a serious uprising in Toledo in 1449 and ended with the wave of massacres in 1473 which were strongly reminiscent of those of 1391. These movements coincided with the sharp rise in prices and the growing agrarian crisis.

ii) Hunger riots in the towns

Urban uprisings took various forms. The price of grain gives a sure indication of one type of urban revolt. The long term rise in grain prices caused progressive hardship /

¹ Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., p.1030. But see J.Torres Fontes, 'Moros, judíos y conversos en la regencia de don Fernando de Antequera', C.H.E., xxxi-xxxii(1960), 72.

hardship. Far more important, however, were the wild fluctuations in the seasonal movements of grain prices. Wheat was a daily problem for the urban poor who could not store grain ^{against} hard times. Even without a harvest crisis, the seasonal variation of grain prices could be substantial, from a low level in the autumn to high prices in June and July. Bad harvests entailed drastic price increases within very short periods of time. Urban and royal authorities tried to mitigate the worst effects of seasonal price fluctuations by turning to the international merchants and appealing to them to import grain.¹ Such measures, however, could not compensate for the immediate social effects of seasonal fluctuations. These effects are most easily seen in the alborotos de hambre (hunger riots), such as that in Seville in 1462 which is described by Garci Sánchez.²

In the year 1462 there were great floods during January in Seville and a fanega of wheat rose to 120 ms. People could not find food to eat and so they ate rotten biscuits from the Crown (naval stores) during this month of February ...

Monday, 29th of March of this same year. At seven o'clock a hunger riot started in Seville. The mass of the people armed themselves and searched for bread. The gangs went from house to house searching for bread and saying that it /

¹ See above, pp.79,81.

² Garci Sánchez, pp.45-7 where details are also given on changes in the face value of coins, attempts to keep prices stable, and imports of wheat.

it had been stored away as a remedy [for hard times]. Everyone hid their valuables, thinking that they wished to steal their coffers. This lasted till mid-day.

Clearly this hunger riot was directly caused by the seasonal movement of wheat prices. Not all such disturbances were so clearly linked to a shortage of grain, yet the problem of food was never far away from riots. In some cases - Seville in 1462 and 1467, and Burgos in 1471 - it is possible to discern a very close connection,¹ and in general one must link the disturbances of the period 1449-1474 to the background of agrarian crisis and price rise.

iii) Taxation and urban revolt

Inevitably popular agitation was also aimed at tax collectors and taxation in general. This was partly due, no doubt, to a situation in which taxes were viewed as a tangible grievance during periods of economic distress. But there were other factors which added to the unpopularity of taxes. Royal taxes were farmed and the farm of each particular tax was listed in the royal accounts as /

¹ Ibid, pp.45,59-60; L.Serrano, Los Reyes Católicos y la ciudad de Burgos, p.113.

as a price. The royal officials, in fact, were using the word 'price' accurately, since the right to farm taxes was offered to the farmer who offered the highest price. Like other prices, the prices of tax farms rose during the century¹ and for the pecheros or tax payers this meant increased taxation. Also, as has been seen, urban authorities tried to alleviate grain shortages by arranging for grain imports. Such operations were costly and towns often imposed extra taxes to pay for them. It is not surprising, therefore, that popular riots were sparked off by attempts to impose and levy taxes. The rebellion of Toledo in 1449 began as a result of a heavy tax levied by command of Alvaro de Luna. The populace, incited by an odrero,² rioted and set fire to the house of the chief tax farmer. The dangerous mood of the Toledo populace - in this case leading to serious rebellion - was thereafter summed up by the saying:

When the odrero blows the flames,
Toledo must riot.³

Toledo, however, was no exception. The unrest in Burgos during the period 1459-64 was connected with increases in municipal taxes and royal alcabalas.⁴ In Seville, in September /

1 Royal income thus tended to keep pace with nominal prices - in marked contrast to seigneurial income.

2 An artisan of leather goods.

3 See Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.35 and Baer, History, ii.279.

4 L.Serrano, op.cit., p.59.

September 1463, armed mobs attacked the royal asistente, Pedro Manrique, and threw him out of town because of an attempt to impose new taxes on meat and fish. Indeed, in this case, only the intervention of the nobility prevented the infuriated populace from stoning Manrique to death.¹ In Guipúzcoa, in 1469, attempts to collect the pedido taxes resulted in riots and insurrection.²

iv) Urban uprisings against Jews and conversos

The most serious popular uprisings were directed against Jews and conversos. The chronology of racial and religious massacres has, of course, been noted by historians. For Baer, the first half of the fifteenth century was a period of freedom for the Jews and conversos because of the religious laxity and moral deterioration at the royal court. 'It was only in the late 1440s', writes Baer,

that the converso problem was revealed in all its gravity; and then it suddenly became a political and religious factor of the first magnitude ... The first racial conflict broke out in 1449 in the city of Toledo.³

In /

1 Garci Sanchez, p.48.

2 Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.662-3.

3 Baer, History, ii. chapter xii passim deals with the sudden deterioration in the 1440s but fails to provide an explanation: see especially pp.244-9, 270-9.

In fact the incidence of popular fanaticism against Jews and conversos coincides perfectly with the chronology of price movements and agrarian crises. The period 1400-1445 saw the re-establishment of the position of the Jews and conversos in government and society which had been severely shaken by the massacres of 1391.¹ The only dangers presented to this recuperation of the Jews and conversos came from the activities of Vincent Ferrer and repressive royal legislation in 1408 and 1412.² There were, however, no popular uprisings against the Jews and conversos of Castile during this period. On the other hand, after 1445, a whole series of disturbances and massacres troubled the kingdom and culminated in the widespread pogroms of 1473.

The relationship between hard times and religious and racial persecution is not surprising. There was the constant suspicion that conversos were still practising Jews. There was the jealousy of conversos who had succeeded in entering the ranks of the patrician oligarchies. Above all, Jewish and converso merchants and tax collectors were hated. Inevitably they, like other merchants and tax farmers, escaped the worst consequences of the sharp rise in prices. Indeed, the urban populace held /

1 Ibid, pp.244-77.

2 Ibid, pp.166-9.

held the Jews and conversos to be responsible for hardships since they raised the prices of their merchandise and remorselessly collected the taxes. Conversos in municipal and royal government were seen to be condoning these extortions. In 1449, for example, Alvaro de Luna entrusted the task of raising money in Toledo to Alonso Cota, a converso who was a rich merchant and treasurer of the town council. It was Cota's house which was the first target of the enraged populace, but the disturbances soon turned into a general attack on the conversos as a whole.¹ The same identification between economic hardship and racial violence caused the attacks on Jews and merchants in Medina del Campo in 1461² and the attacks on Jewish tax collectors in Tolosa in 1469.³ In other cases - in Sepúlveda in 1468 and the wave of massacres in 1473 - the attacks appeared to be purely racial and religious.⁴ Yet it is clear that the racial and religious problems were present for most of the century and that the persecutions and killings were sparked off at the height of an economic crisis.

v) /

1 See ibid., pp.277-83 and Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.33-79.

2 Garcí Sanchez, pp.43-4.

3 Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.662-3.

4 Ibid., pp.643,635-40; Baer, History, ii.306-8.

v) Urban revolt - the degree of violence

The final point to note about urban disturbances is the degree of violence which they entailed. Destruction, pillaging and massacres were substantial despite attempts by the nobility and urban authorities to prevent them. In some cases popular anger subsided after specific acts of violence. In Burgos in 1467, for example, the mobs dispersed after they had succeeded in lynching the routier captain, García Méndez de Badajoz.¹ But in the same year in Toledo destruction and killings reached alarming proportions. The worst excesses started on the 21st day of July. Early in the afternoon the parish bells of Toledo, with the exception of those in the converso districts, summoned the populace to arms. One thousand armed men gathered at the cathedral and, joined by others from outside the town, began a systematic attack on converso property. The fires lasted for more than twenty four hours. Converso regidores were killed and then strung up naked and upside down as a public spectacle. Interventions by the royal authorities failed to prevent the excesses. Indeed more conversos were cruelly put to death on the 6th of August.² The riots in /

1 L. Serrano, op.cit., p.101; Palanco Romero, op.cit., p.72.
 2 Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.97-9.

in Toledo in 1467, however, were only a prelude to the massacres of 1473. This time the troubles originated in Córdoba where racial conflict had built up over a considerable period of time. The riots began with an attack on the house of one of the richest conversos of Córdoba. Labourers and peasants from the surrounding countryside streamed in to join the urban populace in a wave of destruction which lasted three weeks. The riots spread to other towns. In Ecija, Seville, and Jerez, the great nobility managed to prevent massacres. Elsewhere the mobs gained the upper hand. In Jaén, for example, the constable, Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, attracted the hatred of the urban population by defending and protecting the conversos. Mosén Diego de Valera tells how the constable fell victim to the popular fury during mass at the cathedral:

... as the constable knelt down to pray one of the common people (uno del pueblo), who was nearest to him, gave him such a mighty blow on the head with an iron cross-bow that he knocked him to the ground. Then all those who were near him set on him with lances and swords with such fury that, when they had finished, he no longer had the appearance of having once been a human being.

And then they all set out¹ together to rob and kill the conversos.

vi) /

¹ Mem.Divs.Hazs., pp.240-5. See also Baer, History, ii.306-8 and Amador de los Ríos, op.cit., pp.635-40.

vi) Rural anarchy

An anonymous writer was surely correct when he connected the rural anarchy during the latter half of Henry IV's reign with debasement of the coinage and the sharp rise in prices.

The affairs of the kingdom reached such a confused state that the vara of cloth, which used to be worth two hundred mrs, became worth six hundred mrs ... Livestock and all other goods in the kingdom were sold at such high prices that the poor hidalgos, who bought and sold these things, and all other people were ruined ... During this period the most abominable expedients imaginable were practised. Robbery and violence were so common in these realms that the greatest respect was accorded to those who robbed and cheated by the most treacherous and subtle means. Many caballeros and escuderos constructed innumerable castles all over the kingdom with the sole purpose of using them as bases for their acts of robbery. Later, these oppressions became so common that they even came to be publicly perpetrated in the cities and towns, without the refuge of stone fortresses being necessary ...¹

Brigandage, as has been seen, was widespread and in many cases reflected the inability of the lesser nobility to meet their economic problems by legal means.²

Recourse to armed robbery, extortionate taxes on goods in transit, holding people to ransom, and preying on the /

¹ Cited in L. Sáez, op.cit., pp.3-5.

² See above pp.190-2.

the outskirts of the towns were all activities which characterised life in Galicia and the Basque provinces during the fifteenth century and also affected Castile during the reign of Henry IV. Yet, in the centre and south of the kingdom, political issues made the recourse to violence something more than mere brigandage. The structure of royal government and taxation was well articulated and was the chief object of attack by a nobility trying to recoup their losses. In an area like Murcia, for example, the framework of royal government and taxation was amputated in favour of the nobility.¹ Hence the professional mercenaries and noble thugs were drawn, by a process of clientage and patronage, into political issues which were 'respectable'. Rodrigo de Villandrando, after all, was granted many privileges by a grateful John II and ended his days as count of Ribadeo and married to a noble woman of the Stuniga family.² Yet political issues entailed armies rather than robber bands and the destructive effects on rural society could be correspondingly greater. In June 1453, for example, a royal official was sent to the lands round Medinaceli to assess the destruction caused by a mixed force of Aragonese, Navarrese /

1 Torres Fontes, Fajardo, chapters iv-vi, passim.

2 Claros Varones, pp.62-71.

Navarrese, and Castilians who, led by Mosén Rebolledo, launched an attack on the Medinaceli and Guadalajara regions. The results of the inquiry give a grim picture of brutality, sacking and burning, depopulation, and the complete destruction of small villages. The sharp drop in population had still not been fully made up over thirty years later, and there was a substantial increase in deserted villages.¹

Galicia and the Basque provinces, on the other hand, were far removed from the central political issues and the structure of royal government and taxation was extremely weak. In these areas the nobility could not recoup their losses by attacking the royal sources of income, since these were not substantial. Instead the depredations of the nobility in the north were aimed directly against the peasantry and the Church. Indeed, unlike Castile, seigneurial reaction and the oppression of the peasantry in Galicia led to a widespread peasant revolt.² The peasant hermandades of Galicia were associations of the rural oppressed who directed their fury against the nobility and their castles. Occasional signs of peasant unrest during the fifteenth century finally erupted into armed /

1 See Appendix EE below pp. 641-8

2 For what follows see Portella Pazos, Galicia en tiempo de los Fonseca (Madrid, 1957), pp. 11-27, 42-75 and Palanco Romero, op.cit., pp. 55, 72-4.

armed uprising in 1467. The bands of peasants attacked and destroyed over one hundred noble strongholds which had served as bases for robbers and brigands. In some cases the revenge of the peasantry was brutal. The countess of Santa Marta, for example, was hacked to pieces by her peasantry. But the peasants also aimed to reduce arbitrary seigneurial dues and taxes to former levels laid down by custom. In 1467, for example, the hermandad succeeded in forcing the abolition of some exactions in the lordships of the archbishop and cathedral chapter of Santiago.

Faced with widespread peasant uprisings many of the great nobility of Galicia fled. Some, like the archbishop of Santiago, went to Portugal but the majority fled to Castile. The triumph of the Galician hermandad was short lived. In September 1468, Henry IV and Isabella settled their differences by the agreement of Toros de Guisando and the unemployed soldiery of Castile was immediately used by the Galician nobility to crush resistance in the north. By the end of 1469, the Galician nobility had re-established themselves and the seigneurial reaction was once more in full swing. The cry of 'Long live the king and death to the caballeros' was silenced.

4) The Structure of Power Politics

It is difficult to describe the relationship between government and society succinctly. Society in fifteenth century Castile was not feudal, the monarchy was not a feudal monarchy, and the laws governing society were not feudal laws. To apply the term 'bastard feudalism' to Castile would be misleading, if only because of the absence of contracts of indenture and an earlier 'legitimate' feudalism.

Government, in fact, worked on a basis of patronage. The king claimed absolute royal power and there was a remarkable growth in the royal bureaucracy, but the king still had to secure co-operation in order to govern. To secure co-operation the king had at his disposal grants of lordships and titles, cash and pensions, offices in central and local government, monopolies over certain economic activities, and substantial influence over the disposal of church patronage. All these rewards and grants could be used by the monarchy to gain both service and obedience from the nobility. The Libro de Asientos of John II's reign, for example, was drawn up by royal officials in a manner which allowed the workings of the patronage /

patronage system to be seen at a glance.¹ The great nobility, however, exerted political pressure on the monarchy in order to acquire pensions and privileges. What were the bonds which served to unite the nobles of the various political groupings?

1) Political groupings

It is clear that marriage alliances and family ties were of crucial importance in politics. The great nobleman was not interested in royal absolutism or the cortes. Instead he placed his trust in relatives and did his utmost to advance the interests of his family. Thus, for example, the political struggles of John II's reign were largely caused by the actions of Ferdinand of Antequera who deliberately pushed his children into commanding positions throughout the peninsula. The point is well made by Fernán Pérez de Guzmán.

Some men held that this infante [Ferdinand of Antequera] was avaricious because he secured the order of Santiago for the Infante Enrique and the order of Alcántara for the Infante Sancho. These opinions are easily dismissed, for experience shows that every member of the great nobility who gains power or becomes a favourite, takes as much as possible for himself in the way of titles, offices, and vasallos.

This /

¹ See Appendix L where information on noble income is arranged more or less as it is in the original Libro.

This king of Aragon [Ferdinand of Antequera] died ... in Igualada and his death caused the peace and tranquility of Castile to be disturbed. He died at the age of thirty four. The sons he left behind were don Alfonso, who today reigns in Aragon, don Juan, king of Navarre, the Infante don Enrique, master of Santiago, the Infante don Pedro, who died from canon shot at the siege of Naples, and the Infante don Sancho, master of Alcántara, who died shortly before his father. His daughters were doña María, queen of Castile, and doña Leonor, queen of Portugal. Hence his sons and daughters gained possession of the four kingdoms of Spain.¹

Marriages, of course, were arranged with economic as well as political prospects being kept firmly in mind. When, in 1420, the Infante Enrique threw all his political weight into the struggle to gain the hand of John II's sister, his main objective was a dowry which would include the vast marquisate of Villena. Often, however, marriages were aimed chiefly at creating political alliances. The result was that political problems involved an extraordinary ramification of family relationships. If the political narrative is seized at any particular point the ramifications appear at once.

The year is 1442. Alvaro de Luna has been exiled from the court and the king of Navarre and some of the Castilian nobility have gained power. But

... the /

¹ Generaciones, pp.28-9.

... the king [John II of Castile] began to place greater trust in the admiral than in any of the others and, as a result, the king of Navarre was extremely annoyed. The count of Castro, since he was a very prudent noble and knew that the king of Navarre was annoyed about the admiral's close relationship to the king, said to him: 'My lord, it grieves me greatly to see you vexed that the king relies more on the admiral than on any other noble. If you look at the matter properly you will see that there is no one in Castile whom you can trust more - both because of his relationship to you and because of the love for your service which he has always shown. To put a quick end to these problems and to be certain of the admiral and all his relatives, who are the greatest men in the kingdom of Castile and whose lead everybody follows, you should in my opinion marry doña Juana, his daughter, and his lordship the infante should marry doña Beatriz, sister of the count of Benavente. In this way, my lord, you can be sure of the admiral and his relatives and they can be sure of you.'

The importance of such matrimonial alliances was clear to the count of Castro. After all, it was during this very period that the admiral was using his influence against the party of the infantes of Aragon, led by the king of Navarre, in order to persuade the king to give the archbishopric of Toledo to his nephew, García de Osorio.²

The count of Castro supported the claims of the candidate of the infante of Aragon for the archbishopric partly, at least, because he himself was influenced by family ties. His uncle, Sancho de Rojas, had been a close supporter of the /

¹ Cron. Juan II, pp.606-7.

² Ibid., pp.607-8.

the king of Navarre's father, Ferdinand of Antequera, and had been rewarded with the archbishopric of Toledo. The archbishop's support for the Aragonese party had been inherited by his nephews.¹ It was natural, therefore, that the count should advise the king of Navarre to arrange a political marriage. This was sound advice. After the king of Navarre's marriage to Juana Enríquez - a marriage that produced Ferdinand the Catholic - the admiral provided valuable and consistent support for the Aragonese party. Such a marriage provided the king of Navarre with permanent political allies within the kingdom of Castile.² This was a pattern that was repeated throughout the ranks of the nobility. The count of Castro's unwavering support of the Aragonese party's cause, for example, resulted in a series of confiscations and exiles which he counterbalanced, not only by gaining lands and titles in the Crown of Aragon, but also by marrying a Valencian noblewoman.³

Family ties helped to strengthen political bonds, but the great nobility also negotiated political alliances with each other for specific purposes. These were alliances made between the leaders of different political groupings /

1 See in general Generaciones p.56 and in particular I. García Ramila, Estudio del burgalés ilustre, don Diego Gómez de Sandoval (Burgos, 1953), pp.15-49.

2 See Pulgar's interesting comments, Claros Varones, pp.26-7.

3 García Ramila, op.cit., pp.32, 35-9, 48 and Generaciones, pp.87-8.

groupings. The leagues and federations of the great nobility, therefore, tended to be the result of a mixture of hard bargaining between independent noble leaders and natural alliances resulting from close family ties. In 1460, for example, some of the Castilian nobility, led by Archbishop Carillo, formed a league which ostensibly aimed 'to reform the evils of Castile'.¹ The formation of this league was watched anxiously by Juan Pacheco, Henry IV's favourite, and the king of Aragon, John II (formerly king of Navarre), who both sensed a threat to their interests. Family ties were set to work. Pacheco, fearing an alliance between the Castilian nobility and the king of Aragon, tried to safeguard his own position at court by having his brother, Pedro Girón, master of Calatrava, join the league. The leaders of the league, including the admiral, feared the consequences of defeat and wished to have the support of Aragon. Consequently John II of Aragon was asked to join the league by his father-in-law, the admiral. Pacheco and Girón were brothers. John II of Aragon, as we have seen, was the son-in-law of the admiral. These family ties help to explain the actions of Girón and the adhesion of John II of Aragon to the league /

¹ For what follows see Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.85-6, note 6.

league. Yet they were slender ties with which to bind the members of the league as a whole. Hence the basis of the alliance had to be negotiated in advance. For his part, the king of Aragon agreed to give refuge to the members of the league if defeat should result in their expulsion from Castile. He also promised to provide them with suitable sources of income to maintain their status during any period of exile. In return, the leaders of the league swore to restore to the king of Aragon and his supporters those mercedes which they had held in Castile during the period when the Aragonese party had held power. This last point, however, needed to be qualified. Pacheco and Girón had gained from the confiscations of the wealth of the Aragonese party, yet Girón was now attached firmly to the league. Consequently, it was agreed that the restoration of the king of Aragon's incomes in Castile should not include any form of wealth held by Girón and Pacheco. In short, the leaders of this Castilian 'League of the Common Weal' had to arrange a harmony between their conflicting and selfish interests before political operations could commence. In their desire to gain extra sources of income they committed their followers to achieving an agreed objective.

Political /

Political alliances were made between members of the great nobility who were leaders of their own political groupings. What was the nature of the ties which bound the great noble and his followers together? The king was the greatest patron but he was not the only one. The grouping of clients in support of a great noble patron was a feature which contemporaries recognised, even if only in vague descriptive terms.¹ The master of Calatrava, Gonzalo Núñez de Guzmán, for example,

acquired great status, reputation and fame. He had great men in his following and some who did not live with him but received money from him each year.²

Lesser nobles or clients who entered the service of a great lord were rewarded from the lord's patronage resources. Patronage webs covered the towns and churches, and the great nobility also enjoyed a political influence which could be used to gain offices and rewards at court for their supporters.

These patron-client groupings were extremely flexible. Homage was not usually rendered by a client to his great noble patron and oaths seem only to have been used to bind political /

1 Much of what follows on patrons and clients owes a great deal to studies on French and English history: see, in particular, J. Russell Major, 'The Crown and the Aristocracy in Renaissance France', *A.H.R.*, lxi (1964), 631-45. Later medieval Castilian political history has not been analysed along these lines.

2 *Generaciones*, p.50. For detailed descriptions of the exceptionally large clientage grouping of Alvaro de Luna, see *Cron.Luna*, pp.67-8 and *Ref.Halconero*, p.167.

political alliances between the great noble leaders. The patron, moreover, did not always provide any regular payments of rewards for his supporters. The monarchy and the military orders, it is true, made payments of tierra which were remarkably like money fiefs and some of these payments were distributed by the great nobility to their clients. Yet tierra payments lacked the formality of money fiefs and they only formed one of the many rewards of the patronage system. Rather than regular payments or money fiefs, the essence of the patron-client relationship was the service of the client in return for the favour of his lord in securing rewards. A great nobleman's clients and supporters expected rewards and received them in much the same way as the great nobles received their income from the Crown. The relationship was, of course, a matter of mutual agreement and benefit which could be terminated if either party felt aggrieved. When, for example, the Infante Enrique acted in a high handed fashion against the regidores of Toledo in 1429, they wrote him a bitter letter and 'they let him know that they no longer wished to be his or receive tierra, stipends or any other payments from his revenues'.¹

The /

¹ Cron. Juan II, p.456. This chapter of the chronicle gives a good description of the workings of the clientage groupings.

The success and prestige of the great noble conditioned the extent to which he could win support. The great noble could gain support in the expectation of possible rather than actual control over new sources of patronage: yet failure to provide for such expectations could lead to a disastrous loss of prestige and support. Such was the case of Pedro Manrique who, according to some men, 'did not have enough power and authority to enable him to satisfy so many and great men or, when by chance he did acquire power, they were not satisfied'.¹ In general terms the granting of favours and rewards meant that if the great nobility gained substantial wealth from the monarchy they, in their turn, alienated a good deal of their wealth to their supporters. Ferdinand of Antequera, for example, 'was always in debt. The lands he held in Castile, together with income which he acquired from his position as regent, brought him more than 180,000 florine in Castile. But he granted out more than 200,000 florins in tierras and mantenimientos with the result that he remained in debt and pawned the jewels of his camara'.²

ii) /

¹ Generaciones, p.84.

² Cited by J.Torres Fontes, 'La regencia de don Fernando de Antequera', A.E.M., 1(1964), p.383.

ii) Rewards and clientage

Patrons rewarded their supporters from a wide range of resources which they captured from the Crown, the Church, and the towns. The granting of lands and titles served to bind a man like Diego Gómez de Sandoval to his patron, the Infante Juan. In theory such grants were issued by the king of Castile, but in practice men recognised that others were disposing of royal patronage. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, for example, leaves no doubt as to who actually made Diego Gómez de Sandoval a count and directly links his fortunes to that of the Aragonese party:

When his father died he inherited very little wealth but the king of Aragon [Ferdinand of Antequera], when he governed Castile, greatly enhanced his power with vasallos and offices. Later the king of Navarre, his son, gave him the condado of Castro in Castile and Denia and Ayora in Aragon. In this way he became one of the greatest nobles of Castile.¹

This succinct account accurately depicts the dependence of the count's fortunes on the Aragonese party. As early as 1412, Sandoval was given the lordship of Lerma by Ferdinand of Antequera in return for military support in Aragon against the count of Urgel.² In 1455 Diego Gómez de Sandoval, count of Castro since 1426, died in exile in his /

¹ Generaciones, pp.87-8.

² García Ramila, op.cit., p.19.

his Valencian lordships of Denia, Javea, and Ayora which his patron, the king of Navarre, had given him in 1431.¹ During his lifetime his patron's great enemy, Alvaro de Luna, had disposed of royal patronage in a similar fashion by creating at least half a dozen counts.²

Inevitably, in their attacks on the royal resources of patronage, the nobility concentrated a good deal of attention on acquiring offices in church and state for their clients. As the example of don Rodrigo de Pimentel and the order of Santiago has shown, control of a military order implied control of a formidable machine of patronage. The encomiendas of the military orders could provide their holders with a substantial income of between 70,000 and 400,000 ms per year.³ Moreover, the comendador and the bishop were also powerful figures in local and regional politics. It was, after all, only natural that a Mendoza should be bishop of Sigüenza and a Figueroa bishop of Badajoz since these sees lay in regions dominated by these families.⁴ Hence, as with the royal finances, noble and ecclesiastical power tended to fuse together at the local level.

The introduction of clients into key offices in church /

1 Ibid., p.48.

2 See Halconero, p.179.

3 See above pp.322-6.

4 See Tarsicio, Elección, pp.43,78,82.

church and state strengthened the control of the great noble leaders. When Ferdinand of Antequera secured the archbishopric of Toledo for Sancho de Rojas, and when Alvaro de Luna did the same for his brother, it was clearly expected that these men should throw their new prestige into the support of their patrons. Moreover, hardly any office was unworthy of attention. In 1447, for example, the count of Castro held the office of the secret seals with a salary of 12,000 mrs per year and Pedro de Guzmán, besides holding 102,200 mrs per year from the Crown in tierra and mercedes, held the office of alguacil mayor of Seville with a salary of 28,000 mrs per year.¹ Even a clerkship of the exchequer was worthy of attention and the royal documents sometimes indicate clearly the determining influence of the patron in such appointments. On the 20th of February 1446, for example, Alfonso XII, the puppet of Pimentel and other great nobles, wrote to his contadores mayores:-

My wish is ... that the 6,480 mrs of ración which Ruy Fernández of Jaén, inhabitant of Madrid, held from me as clerk of the exchequer and the 3,000 mrs of quitación attached to the same office and the 3,000 mrs which he held for two lances, are to be given and held ... each year for life by Francisco del Castillo, servant of don Rodrigo Pimentel, count of Benavente, and a member of my council, inasmuch as the said Ruy Fernández is dead.²

It /

1 Suárez, Libro, pp.340,367; A.M.S., caja 1447-8, nómina de lo ordinario.

2 A.G.S., Exp.Hac., leg.1, doc.167. For a description of a distribution of minor offices by Luna to his clients see Halconero, p.163.

It is clear that not all clients were drawn from the ranks of the nobility and that clientage spread into the lower regions of royal and urban administration. The fact was that a noble like the count of Castro never actually did any work in the royal chancery, despite the office he held, and that the necessary political penetration of the royal framework of government, both at the centre and in the localities, could only be achieved by including administrators, civil servants, and patrician oligarchs within the patronage system.

The great nobility certainly managed to instal or acquire clients in posts in the central royal administration, although the extent of these 'placements' cannot be assessed with any degree of accuracy. Certainly many of the lesser offices - for example clerkships of the royal exchequer - were held by servants of the great nobility.¹ The key offices - those of the royal secretaries, contadores mayores, and oidores of the royal audiencia - were harder to acquire since the monarchy naturally controlled them closely. Alvaro de Luna's political domination in John II's /

¹ The following, for example, held offices as escribanos de cámara:- Gonzalo González Capoche, secretary of the archbishop of Toledo; Pedro Alfonso de Aguilar, secretary of the Infante Enrique; Anton González de Almonte, secretary of the duke of Medina Sidonia. See documents for the years 1431, 1443, 1450 and 1455 in B.N., MS., 13018, fol. 224R; A.G.S., E.M.R., leg. 2, no. 27; A.D.M., Alc. Duc., leg. 55, docs. 36, 39.

II's reign is, perhaps, best explained in terms of his success in placing his clients in these key offices. Luna, unlike the infantes of Aragon, for long enjoyed the complete confidence of the king and there was, therefore, no apparent conflict between the king and the constable when such appointments were made. Nevertheless, by placing his clients in these offices, Alvaro de Luna tightened his hold on the royal administration. Diego González de Toledo, for example, became oidor, referendario, contador mayor de cuentas, and a member of the royal council.¹ Another of Luna's clients, Ray García de Villalpando, became an oidor and a member of the royal council.² Fernán López de Saldaña, 'servant and creature of the constable', became contador mayor and at various times held other offices in the royal chancery and king's household.³ Alfonso Pérez de Vivero, brought up as a page and camarero in Luna's household, rose in the royal administration to the high rank of royal secretary, contador mayor, and royal councillor.⁴

The same examples of Luna clients can be used to demonstrate the extension of patronage into the towns. Alvaro de Luna and his son were themselves successful in acquiring /

1 See above p.459.

2 He was already an oidor in 1425 and remained in high office until Luna's downfall in 1453.

3 Fernán López de Saldaña was another of the many Luna clients who were promoted to high office after the purge of 1429. On his promotion and relationship to Luna see Cron.Luna, p.71 and the accusations of the Aragonese party in B.N.,MS.,13105, fols.23R-28R.

4 A useful summary of his career in Donapetry, Historia de Vivero, pp.159-69.

acquiring the offices of alcalde mayor and alguacil mayor of Toledo respectively. Ruy García de Villapando held the lieutenancy of the alcaldía mayor of Toledo and later became asistente.¹ Diego González de Toledo's brother, Pero Franco, was treasurer of the royal mint in Toledo and Alfonso Franco, as we have seen, held the office of regidor.² Fernán López de Saldaña was given charge of the royal dockyards of Seville, where his father already held the office of regidor, and Alfonso Pérez de Vivero was made mayordomo perpetuo of Seville.³

On the whole, however, power in the towns continued to lie in the hands of the great nobility. These nobles, as alguaciles mayores and alcaldes mayores, received handsome salaries which distinguished them clearly from the rank and file of the patrician oligarchs who were often their clients. The attraction of the political and financial opportunities offered by the towns, goes far in helping to explain the apparently confusing pattern of local politics. The struggles between the Ponce de León and Guzmán families to secure political domination over the town of Seville were similar to other conflicts in Toledo, Avila, Palencia, Burgos, and Murcia.⁴ Inevitably, such /

1 Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.30-1, 77.

2 See above pp.461-2.

3 See A.M.S., caja 1428-9, nómina de quitaciones and caja 1449-50, royal letter dated 29th April 1448.

4 See Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.148-52 and Palanco Romero, op.cit., pp.41-9.

such struggles became linked to the problems of court politics and also caused division among the officeholders of the urban oligarchies. The fact was that the great nobility were both a court nobility and an urban nobility. Holding royal pensions and mercedes they depended on the court for much of their income, even if they did not reside in a court which was perpetually on the move.

Finally, as might be expected, pensions and mercedes of royal revenues also figured prominently in the rewards which patrons distributed to their clients. It is impossible to give an accurate assessment of the extent to which royal privileges were re-alienated by patrons to their clients. Moreover, even if such an estimate could be made it would fail to account for royal privileges granted directly to the client at the instigation of the great noble.¹ The evidence for individual transactions, however, abounds. The Infante Juan, for example, rewarded Diego Gómez de Sandoval's support in 1420 by re-alienating to him 50,000 florins per year which he held from the Crown.² The allegiance of a town might be similarly confirmed or acquired by a judicious grant of money. In March 1442, for example, the king of Navarre and the Infante Enrique secured their position in Toledo by /

¹ But see, for example, the figures for the king of Navarre's extensive re-alienations of mercedes and mantenimientos in L. Suárez Fernández, 'Las rentas castellanas del infante don Juan, rey de Navarra y de Aragón', Hisp., xix (1959), 192-204.

² García Ramila, op.cit., p. 34.

by renouncing mercedes of 30,000 mrs and 40,000 mrs per year to the alcalde mayor of the town, Pero López de Ayala.¹ These were mercedes which were held from the Crown but - as with all such mercedes - the holders could freely renounce or sell them.

In return for these rewards the great nobility expected loyal service from their clients. The actions of the count of Castro after the defeat of the infantes of Aragon in 1429, for example, showed a shrewd blend of loyalty to his patrons and self interest. The count remained within the kingdom, continued to inform the infantes on political developments, refused to surrender the areas and castles under his control, and imposed personal peace terms on John II of Castile which stipulated that he could not be summoned for any military offensive against his patrons. At the same time, however, the count succeeded in guaranteeing that his incomes from the Castilian Crown continued to be paid.²

Clients placed in the royal bureaucracy were also expected to serve the interests of their patrons as well as those of the king. In 1444, for example, John II's wife died and secret arrangements were made for a French marriage. Mosén Diego de Valera was ordered to collect secret /

1 Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.22 note 28.

2 García Ramila, op.cit., pp.30-2 and Cron.Juan II, pp. 456-7, 481.

secret letters at court and to present himself to the royal secretary, Pedro Fernández de Lorca, in order to obtain the necessary cash for his diplomatic mission in France. The secretary, however, was one of Alvaro de Luna's clients and immediately passed all the information to his exiled patron who was desperately anxious to arrange a Portuguese marriage. In the event John II married Isabel of Portugal.¹ The actions of Pedro Fernández de Lorca illustrate the way in which a client was expected to serve his patron. Indeed, one of the chronicles records a speech by Alvaro de Luna in which the constable emphasised that these were the very qualities which he expected his clients in the royal administration to display.²

The existence of clientage on a large scale could produce a certain stability and cohesion in political groupings. At court, for example, Alvaro de Luna's control of the royal bureaucracy was so well established over a considerable period of time that

not only were all matters relating to the royal revenues, treasures, offices of the household and judicial matters of the kingdom decided by his ordinance, but nothing at all was done without his command. For although writs, sentences, assignments, privileges and gifts were granted in the king's name and signed by him, yet the secretaries did not write, nor the king sign, nor the chancellor seal, nor the letters have any effect or application without the constable's approval.³

Similarly /

1 See Diego de Valera's own account of this episode in Cron.abreviado, p.314.

2 See Cron.Luna, p.315.

3 Generaciones, pp.120-1.

Similarly in the localities the web of patronage and alliances allowed the great nobility to drag the towns into their political movements. In 1440, for example, the rebellion directed against Alvaro de Luna gained the support of many of the town controlling nobility, with the result that Toledo, Avila, Segovia, Zamora, Valladolid, Burgos, Plasencia and Guadalajara joined the forces of the opposition.¹

5) Conclusions on the Causes and Chronology of Political Instability

1) John II and Henry IV

An able king who used patronage judiciously could ensure co-operation from most of the great nobility and royal government could be seen to work effectively. If the king was weak the use of patronage could seriously impair royal power. The difference, perhaps, lay between rewards which were granted in return for faithful service under an able king, and the extensive bribes which a weak king granted when faced with open or implied threats of political rebellion. If the king was a minor or politically inept, royal patronage and income could fall into the /

¹ Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.149.

the hands of particular factions or individuals.

Seen in this light, the minority of John II and the political incompetence of Henry IV were both important factors in accounting for the political instability in Castile during the fifteenth century. John II's minority allowed Ferdinand of Antequera, even after he became king of Aragon, to use the patronage resources of the Castilian monarchy in order to forward the interests of his family and supporters. By the time John II was old enough to rule, the various members of the Aragonese party were solidly entrenched in political power and had control of many of the resources of royal patronage. The assault by the king and Alvaro de Luna on the power of the Aragonese party inevitably caused a political crisis if only because of the extent of the pensions, privileges, and offices which were at stake. The king of Navarre alone, as has been seen, had sums of approximately 3,000,000 ms and 7,500,000 ms at stake during the two decisive points of the struggle, in 1429 and 1444, when the infantes of Aragon were expelled from the kingdom.¹

The very power of the infantes of Aragon made the task of monarchical recovery in Castile extremely difficult. So too did the strategic factors involved. To
a /

¹ See Appendices H, I, and GG for Navarre's income and for the chronology of political events, pp. 569-71, 659-66.

a certain extent the problems posed by the Infante Juan's control of royal income provided the Castilian monarchy with an advantage in that the infante, anxious to retain his mercedes, invariably preferred to negotiate rather than fight on the battlefield. Indeed it was Alvaro de Luna who, time and again, tried to force a decisive battle which would crush the Aragonese party completely. The Infante Enrique, on the other hand, relied less on income which he held from the Crown. His power lay in his control of the military order of Santiago and in the peripheral areas of the kingdom to which he could retreat when outmanoeuvred at court or in battle. Both infantes, moreover, enjoyed refuge and support in the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon. The political crisis of John II's reign was, therefore, an international diplomatic struggle as well as an internal problem of power politics. Both Alvaro de Luna and, later, Henry IV sought the support of Portugal in order to redress the balance against Aragon.¹

The task of facing John II and Alvaro de Luna was, therefore, threefold. In the first place, they had to expel the Aragonese party from the central basis of power at court. Secondly, they had to secure effective control over peripheral areas of the kingdom which could serve as bases /

¹ See Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.80-1,85-7,91-2,106, 108-17,124-6,187,305-6.

bases for a counter-attack on the monarchy. Finally, they had to construct a diplomatic alliance against Aragon. This task was largely achieved by 1445 and the decisive battle of Olmedo. By this date the Infante Enrique had been crushed, the order of Santiago had passed to Alvaro de Luna, and royal authority was accepted in almost all areas of the kingdom. Moreover the mistakes of 1429 were not repeated. In that year also the Aragonese party had been defeated, the leaders driven into exile, and their revenues confiscated. Subsequently, when Aragonese and Castilian diplomats met to discuss the possibility of compensation for these revenues, John II and Alvaro de Luna prolonged the negotiations until they broke down. Such a line of action was an open invitation for the infantes of Aragon to recover their power by armed intervention. After the battle of Olmedo in 1445, however, a negotiated settlement assigned 3,500,000 ms per year to the king of Navarre.¹ This was a considerable sum of money. Yet the opponents of the monarchy had been decisively beaten and the payments could be stopped at any given moment. The price of the pension was the king of Navarre's abstention from Castilian politics.

That the prolonged crisis of John II's reign ended in a victory for the Crown was due as much to the grim determination /

¹ Suárez Fernández, ubi supra, p.195.

determination of the king and his favourite as to the disunity displayed by the infantes of Aragon. Both John II and Alvaro de Luna were endowed with the qualities necessary for such a struggle. The king, motivated by greed, could at times show a remarkable ruthlessness in attacking opponents and confiscating their possessions.¹ His favourite, on the other hand, possessed considerable political acumen and military skill. Both men countered the power and pretensions of the infantes by stressing the majesty of the king and by launching a policy of absolutism. The reign of John II, therefore, was not one which was marked only by noble anarchy. On the contrary, the crises were partly of the monarchy's own making and are evidence of a deliberate policy to restore a royal power which had been seriously compromised during a long minority.

The reign of Henry IV provided a marked contrast to that of John II. Unlike John II, Henry IV was not a minor when he ascended the throne of Castile. Moreover, he inherited a situation in which royal authority appeared to be firmly established. The Aragonese party had been defeated /

¹ Many contemporaries believed that the downfall of men like Fernán Alfonso de Robles and Alvaro de Luna was prompted as much by royal greed as by other motives. This belief is supported by documentary evidence: see, for example, C. Espejo, 'El leonés Fernán Alfonso de Robles', B.S.E.C., iii (1907-8), 170-75, 177-84 and above, pp. 161-2 where my calculations of Luna's income are based on surveys carried out at John II's command.

defeated and the great nobility deprived of effective leaders. Alvaro de Luna himself had been executed and, whatever the personal motives involved, John II had publicly justified the execution by arguing that his favourite had usurped royal powers.

Henry IV, however, lacked the will to govern. Time and again he failed to press home an attack on his enemies when he was in a commanding position. The king's indecision and lack of resolve led to failure and the loss of supporters. Henry IV's weakness was made clear to him, for example, in an episode in 1464 which is justly famous. In September of that year, the rebel nobility published a manifesto throughout the kingdom which contained a most virulent attack on the person of the king. Henry IV was accused of protecting the heathen, despising the Church, manipulating the coinage, perverting justice, and surrendering his person and powers to Beltran de la Cueva. For the first time the rebels publicly alleged that Juana was illegitimate and that Henry IV was not her father. They demanded that prince Alfonso should be recognised as heir to the throne and claimed the right to resort to arms if their demands were not accepted. At this stage Henry IV enjoyed considerable support from the nobility and towns and /

and a vigorous royal offensive was both desired and expected. The king summoned a council meeting to consider the insulting manifesto and decide on a course of action.

The first to speak at the council meeting was Lope de Barrientos, bishop of Cuenca, who had been one of the ablest councillors of John II. His advice contained that blend of calculated realism and principle which had characterised royal policies during John II's reign. The king was God's anointed and the rebels were traitors. The king relied on truth and justice whereas the rebels relied on duplicity. The king had the advantage in the balance of power since he was richer, more powerful and better supported than his enemies who lacked support and resources and were disliked by the people. In these circumstances the king should not come to any arrangement with the rebels but should, at all costs, confront them in battle. The bishop's advice was not to Henry IV's liking.

And since fighting and the rigour of arms was foreign to the king's temperament and hateful to his disposition, he turned to the bishop and said rather sharply:

'Those of you who do not have to fight or set your hands to arms always dispose freely of the lives of other people. Is it really your wish, my lord bishop, that battle be waged at all costs so that men on both sides perish? It is well seen that those who have to fight in battle are not your sons and that it cost you nothing to raise them. I would have you know that this matter must be dealt with in a different way and not according to your reasoning and advice.'

Then/

Then the bishop, a bold man, answered him impatiently:

'I have already noticed, Sire, and I now see that your highness does not wish to reign in peace or retain the freedom of a king. Since you do not wish to defend your honour or avenge outrages, you must not expect to reign with fame and glory. Therefore, I must tell you that from this point on you will be reputed the most abject king who ever reigned in Spain and you will regret these lost opportunities when you no longer have a choice.'¹

The bishop's words were prophetic. The king's decision to negotiate was disastrous and within a year his effigy was dethroned and kicked to the ground in the ceremony at Avila. Henry IV, inclined by nature to buy political support, now had to compete with Alfonso XII.

'I declare and give my royal word, Henry IV told the papal legate, 'that from this moment on if they [the supporters of Alfonso XII] return to my service as my natural subjects, not only do I wish to forgive them but I also wish to grant them mercedes and enlarge their fortunes'.²

In this competition to buy political support all the resources of royal patronage were used and the monarchy had clearly lost control of the political situation.

ii) The crisis in noble income

The personalities and abilities of John II and Henry IV are important factors which have to be considered in any /

¹ Cron. Enrique IV., pp.139-9. See also Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.256-67.

² Cited by Benito Ruano, Toledo, p.149.

any analysis of fifteenth century politics. Yet these points only acquire a real significance when they are placed in the context of political and economic chronology. After all, the reign of John II was not one of unqualified success and the reign of Henry IV was not one of unmitigated political disaster. In 1445 John II decisively crushed his enemies at the battle of Olmedo and the intricate political conspiracies of the great nobility seemed to have come to an end. Yet, within four years, the populace of Toledo introduced a new element into politics when they unleashed their fury against the conversos and tax collectors. The nobility were quick to seize the opportunity and turn the uprising into a rebellion against the Crown. From this point on the political history of Castile contained an explosive mixture of noble intrigue and popular unrest. Yet complete anarchy was not unleashed at Henry IV's accession to the throne in 1454. The chronicler Fernando del Pulgar emphasised the differences between the first and second decades of Henry IV's reign and historians have also made the same point. Within the general context of instability during Henry IV's reign, the last ten years were infinitely more disastrous than the first ten.¹

Political /

¹ See Claros Varones, pp.9-20 and Tarsicio, Isabel, pp.52-9.

Political instability, in other words, kept pace with deteriorating economic conditions.

In general terms the crisis in the great nobility's income is central to the political history of all this period. As has been seen, brigandage and war enabled the rural nobility to recoup their fortunes to a certain extent. The same crisis faced the great nobility - yet here the process was more complex. Faced with civil and international wars, the later medieval Castilian monarchy found it only too easy to escape the short term effects of financial crisis by debasement of the coinage. In the long run this merely aggravated the relationship between the Crown and those living on fixed incomes, and throughout this period this included many of the great nobility.

It has been argued in this study that it is misleading to assume that a catalogue of lands, titles, and lordships is a reliable indicator of the wealth and sources of income of the various noble families and ecclesiastical and urban institutions. The existence of these lordships did not mean that the lords exploited the land by demesne farming. It is probable, remembering the experience of other areas of western Europe, that such a situation had arisen in the fourteenth century, as /

as a consequence of the Black Death, when labour shortages and a fall in demand encouraged the commutation of services and the leasing out of demesne land. The lack of demesne exploitation, static seigneurial dues, and long leases created an unfavourable situation for the great nobility which was aggravated by debasements and devaluations. Only strong monarchs, such as John II and Ferdinand and Isabella, could break out of the vicious circle by resorting to forced loans and the confiscation of church plate. Weak kings, like Henry IV, rendered the vicious circle yet more vicious by continuous debasements.¹

The crisis in noble wealth was a crucial factor in motivating the politics of the great noble families. It is true that the chief criterion for assessing nobility was birth. Yet it is equally true that the chief criterion for determining status within the ranks of the nobility was wealth and power. 'In these days', wrote Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, 'he who is richest is most noble. So why should we look in the book of lineages when we will find that their nobility lies in their wealth.'²

It /

¹ For example John II in 1429, unlike Henry IV at a later date, eschewed a policy of debasement, confiscated church plate and imposed forced loans. A.M.S., caja 1429 (pedido), for example, contains some 300 folios on forced loans in Seville alone.

² Generaciones, p.49.

It has been noted that, from one point of view, the reign of John II can be interpreted as an absolutist crusade to restore the power of the monarchy after a long and debilitating minority. It has also been argued that the nobility did not oppose the claims made by the king to wield absolute royal power. Why, then, did the nobility participate so actively in the political crises? Fernán Pérez de Guzmán was in no doubt as to what the real issues were:

... the greed of the nobility to augment and enlarge their lands and revenues cannot be forgiven. Setting aside conscience and love of patria, they created the conditions which allowed them to profit. I do not doubt that it pleased them to have such a king, for during this turbulent and agitated period the lively waters of the river could make them rich fishermen ... But during all this period it could not truly be said that there was any danger, either in word or deed, to the person of the king. The truth, if we set aside all prejudice, is clear. However much the princes and the other great nobles who followed them might say that they wished to free the will of the king from the power of the constable ... their real motives were to possess and take over the position of the constable ... In this way they could enrich their lands and families. For they knew that as long as the constable retained his position, they could not gain their objectives and so they worked to remove him.¹

The quest by the nobility for new sources of income caused political alliances and clientage groupings to break down and reform into new patterns with bewildering speed /

1 Ibid., pp.137-42.

speed. It was this compulsive search for wealth which caused Fernán Pérez de Guzmán to reflect that political instability and endless confiscations were the prevailing features of life in Castile. Alvaro de Luna, for example,

... made the king carry out many and great executions, imprisonments, expulsions, confiscations of wealth, and deaths. In this he found substantial support because, by sharing out among some what he confiscated from others, he had plenty of helpers. For the praiseworthy custom of the Castilians has reached such a point, that men will consent to the imprisonment and death of a friend or relative in order to have a share in the booty.¹

The fact was that the balance of power in clientage did not necessarily lie with the patrons. Individual nobles could and did sell their support in ways which best suited their own search for income. Moreover, whatever their social and economic origins, successful clients became increasingly independent. Thus, even royal officials who had been 'raised from the ground' gained sufficient power and status to enable them to pursue their own political interests. Their sons received mayorazgos or bishoprics and their daughters married into noble families.² The downfall and execution of Alvaro de Luna was, accordingly, an object lesson in the vagaries of fortune. Early in his career, when he was exiled from the /

1 *Ibid.*, p.136.

2 See, for example, the cases of Diego González de Toledo and Diego Arias de Avila, above, pp. 294, 460-1.

the royal court in 1427, the constable had been betrayed by one of his most important clients, the contador mayor Fernán Alfonso de Robles.¹ Years later, in 1453,

while the king was in Burgos, the constable perceived that Alfonso Pérez de Vivero, whom he had raised from the ground and made into a very great man and placed in an important position near the king, was working with the king to achieve his disgrace and ruin and, unable to suffer this, ... he had him killed.²

The murder of the royal secretary and contador mayor was the immediate cause of Alvaro de Luna's imprisonment and execution.

These were spectacular but by no means isolated examples of the breakdown of clientage. Moreover Alvaro de Luna's fate was not unique, as Fernán Pérez de Guzmán pointed out. 'Many other great and middling men were ruined. For Castile finds it easier to acquire new wealth than to retain wealth already acquired. Often she destroys those whom she herself has raised up.'³

iii) The fusion of popular insurrection and noble intrigue

Towards the middle of the fifteenth century the two disruptive elements in Castilian politics - noble intrigue and /

1 C.Espejo, ubi supra, passim. See also Fernán Pérez de Guzmán's highly prejudiced treatment of this incident in Generaciones, pp.105-8.

2 Generaciones, pp.126-7. For the circumstances surrounding the murder see Suárez, Los Trastámaras, pp.208-9 and the vivid account in Cron.Luna, pp.344-60.

3 Generaciones, p.88.

and popular insurrection - fused together to form a new and far more serious threat to the stability of the kingdom. The example of the rebellion of Toledo in 1449 shows how easily popular grievances could be widened into a general attack on the court. The rebellion, as has been seen, began as a popular uprising against tax collectors and conversos.¹ Almost immediately a nobleman, Pero Sarmiento, intervened and redirected the popular fury into a broadly based movement against Alvaro de Luna.² This was not a difficult task, since all that Pero Sarmiento had to do was identify Alvaro de Luna as the real perpetrator of all the hardships suffered by the populace. The hatred of the conversos and their success, the burning resentment against taxation and tax officials, the growing economic hardships suffered by artisans and peasants, the suspicions of corruption in municipal government - all these were inextricably linked together and blamed on Alvaro de Luna. They were also linked to the decline in the economic fortunes of the greater and lesser nobility. All this was made clear in the requerimiento which Pero Sarmiento sent to John II.

Inasmuch as the said Alvaro de Luna has sought and found ways to give the said offices [in church and state] to infidels and heretics, enemies of our sacred laws and of our king and persons and wealth; so /

1 Above p. 502-5.

2 For what follows generally see the excellent study in Benito Ruano, Toledo, chapter II passim and the same author's, 'La "Sentencia-Estatuto" de Pero Sarmiento contra los conversos Toledanos', R.U.M., iv(1957), 277-306.

so these people, with hate and enmity and by virtue of their offices, have usurped and taken the lordship which belongs to the great nobility of your kingdoms and the greater part of all the wealth of the true Christians and all the estates.

Moreover the said Alvaro de Luna, your constable, has found ways by which he farms your taxes, revenues, and rights to these heretics and infidels, using global farms and identifying his interests with them, and making you grant unjust and inhuman laws with the result that your revenues are farmed for his own fiendish interests. Many people have been ruined as a result of this ... and all the estate of the artisans and labourers is lost.¹

Later Pero Sarmiento elaborated the same theme in his Sentencia-Estatuto on Toledan government. The conversos, Sarmiento alleged, had summoned Alvaro de Luna to their aid. These were the very conversos who

by means of great swindles and frauds have taken, carried off, and stolen, great and innumerable sums of mr̄s and silver belonging to the king, our lord, and to his revenues, rights and taxes; and have destroyed and ruined many noble ladies, caballeros, and hijos dalgo; and consequently have oppressed, destroyed, robbed, and devastated all the vast majority of the ancient houses and riches of the old Christians of this town, its land and jurisdiction, and of all the kingdoms of Castile ... Furthermore, during the period when they held the public offices of this town ... many of the places belonging to the town were depopulated and destroyed and the lands and places belonging to the town were alienated and lost. Moreover, all the mr̄s of the revenues and common property of this town have been eaten up in their interests and concerns, with the result that all the possessions and honours of the patria have been /

1 The complete text is in Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.186-90.

been used up and destroyed and they have become the masters in order to destroy the holy faith and the old Christians ...¹

In the towns, therefore, popular unrest came to be used as a weapon against the precarious stability brought about by political control and clientage. Despite the careful control which the monarchy imposed on Toledo, for example, the racial hatred in the town sparked off serious rebellions against royal authority in 1449 and 1467. By the 1470s hatred of conversos could be used by nobles of all political persuasions. In 1473, for example, Juan Pacheco ousted Isabella's supporters in Córdoba by deliberately fomenting a popular movement against the conversos. A year later, in Valladolid, Isabella's supporters sought popular support by allowing the populace to attack conversos and their property.² The monarchy would only escape from this labyrinth when royal authority itself took the initiative against the conversos.

iv) The anarchy of the 1460s

The anarchy in Castile coincided with the economic crisis of the 1460s. It was during these years that the nobility had their greatest successes in gaining control of royal revenues and patronage. The search for new sources /

¹ Ibid., pp. 191-6.

² See Baer, A History, ii. 306-9 and Amador de los Ríos, op. cit., p. 640.

sources of income was, of course, not confined to the latter half of Henry IV's reign. Yet there was a significant difference in the balance of power between the monarchy and the nobility. At the turn of the fourteenth century it was still possible for the monarchy to step in and resume a tax in a lordship which had already been alienated. Subsequently, during the reign of John II, the Crown did manage on the whole to resist noble encroachments on the central power. The immense revenues piled up by the Infante Juan were, after all, confiscated on at least two occasions.¹ With the 1460s, however, there were two kings both of whom alienated revenues desperately in attempts to win political support. Not only were specific revenues alienated but their administration was alienated as well.²

From the economic point of view the period from 1460 onwards was one of general and widespread crisis - there was an almost constant shortage of grain, outbreaks of plague were frequent enough to be almost continuous and there was an almost vertical price inflation from 1460 to 1475. Is it surprising that this was the period when the nobility, faced with a sharp ^{price}/rise and inadequate income, made their greatest effort to acquire new revenues? When /

1 In 1429 and 1445.

2 See above pp.173-6.

When the boy Alfonso was elected king in 1465, his electors were in fact making a bid for complete control of all royal wealth. Royal privileges granted by the boy-king to a don Juan Pacheco or a count of Benavente were authorised by a royal council dominated by precisely these members of the nobility. It was during this period too that monopolies in favour of the great nobility were established on profitable economic activities.¹

The success of the great nobility was not restricted to their acquisition of central power, for the 1460s saw the local fabric of royal administration crumble before the onslaught of the nobility. The situation in Murcia during the fifteenth century illustrates the process. It could hardly be argued that, prior to the 1460s, the political life of Murcia was marked by stability. Yet, prior to the 1460s, the struggles for power in Murcia were linked to political issues at court and took place within a context which involved support or opposition to royal policies.² Royal corregidores and asistentes were sent to Murcia and intervened to establish royal control. Even as late as 1464, for example, the royal asistente, Pedro de Castro, was preparing to break the hold of the nobility over the town government of Murcia by isolating the /

¹ See above pp.40-1,174.

² See Torres Fontes, Fajardo, chapter II and especially pp.35-42.

the greatest noble, Pedro Fajardo, and replacing the oligarchy with regidores appointed on an annual basis. Indeed, the asistente's enemies even alleged that he had openly declared 'that he would appoint shoemakers and painters as regidores of this town as he had done in the town of Leon when he was corregidor there ...'.¹ Yet the 1460s witnessed a complete collapse of royal authority in Murcia. The adelantado, Pedro Fajardo, ruled Murcia virtually as if it were an independent kingdom. His support of Alfonso XII gained him the greatest amount of privileges and left him free to establish complete control in Murcia. Moreover, after Alfonso XII's death, he refused to recognise Henry IV as king of Castile, despite the settlement of the Toros de Guisando. Hence, from the death of Alfonso XII until the accession of Isabella, Murcia remained without a monarch. Pedro Fajardo, controlling the towns and countryside of Murcia, was regarded, in the words of the actas capitulares of the town council of Murcia, 'almost as a viceroy'.² The situation was aptly summed up by Fernando del Pulgar when, in 1473, he wrote to the bishop of Coria:-

As /

1 Ibid., pp.50,81,92-3.

2 Ibid., pp.17-19,99,116-7.

As far as the kingdom of Murcia is concerned, I swear to you, my lord, that we regard it as being as foreign to us as the kingdom of Navarre because no letters, messengers, procuradores, or quaestors, have gone there from here, or come here from there, for over five years ...

Pulgar was not exaggerating the degree of estrangement and the loss of royal control. All the royal finances of the kingdom of Murcia during the ten years 1465-1474, for example, were in the hands of Pedro Fajardo. This was only one more example of Alfonso XII's generous privileges which, in this case, added over 9,500,000 mrs to the income at Pedro Fajardo's disposal. Logically enough the first item of expenditure which Pedro Fajardo incurred each year was a sum of 65,000 mrs, payable to Rodrigo Pimentel, count of Benavente, who was one of the boy-king's principal supporters and councillors.²

The degree of independence which Pedro Fajardo established in Murcia during the 1460s was not much greater than that established by the great nobility in other areas of the kingdom of Castile. Don Pedro Girón, as the preface to his letters show, enjoyed viceregal power in Andalusia:

We, don Pedro Girón, by the grace of God master of the military order of Calatrava, camarero mayor of the king, our lord don Alfonso, and a member of his royal council, and his viceroy (viso Rey) appointed and deputed by his highness for the whole of Andalusia and its cities, towns, and places, and /

1 Cited ibid., p.119.

2 Ibid., p.103 and, for the accounts for these years, pp.245-62.

and with powers to take any revenues belonging to the said lord and king, and with powers to use such mrs and spend them in matters convenient to his service, or in any other matters which the said king can do by virtue of his supreme power ...

This was the ideal at which the great nobility aimed - to wield the absolute royal power of the Crown to their own financial advantage. Girón was an exception in that he was theoretically a viceroy. North west of Murcia, as we have seen, Pedro de Acuña usurped all royal revenues in his lordships during the period 1463-1470.² In the west, the whole León province of the order of Santiago was under the control of Rodrigo Pimentel, count of Benavente, who disposed of royal revenues as well as the wealth of the order whose titular master was Alfonso XII.³ In the east, on the frontier with Aragon, the count of Medinaceli usurped all royal revenues during the period 1464-1475.⁴ In the north, in Galicia and the Basque provinces, the royal administrative fabric was always weak and the nobility turned their attention to plundering the wealth of the Church, both by usurping the revenues of rectors and by launching full scale assaults on such vulnerable bishoprics as Tuy, Mondoñedo, Lugo, and Orense.⁵ In some areas of the /

1 Letter of 15 Jan. 1465 in Col. Dip. Carmona, pp. 62-3.

2 Above p. 170.

3 Above pp. 320-2.

4 Above p. 170.

5 Above pp. 255-6, 283 and Portela Pazos, Galicia en tiempo de los Fonseca, pp. 73-5.

the kingdom, a semblance of royal authority remained. Yet this semblance of royal authority was purchased at a high price. In 1468, for example, Henry IV regained nominal control over Toledo. In practice, however, authority in Toledo remained with Pero López de Ayala whose support was bought for a merced of 1,000,000 mrs per year, half the revenues of the royal mint of Toledo for life, the lordship of Fuensalida, the title of count, and a merced of 90,000 mrs per year for his son.¹

¹ Benito Ruano, Toledo, pp.108-9.